

# WORKERS VOICE

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- Unions and Plots

**COMMUNIST WORKERS ORGANISATION**

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## U.S. UNLEASHES DOGS OF WAR!

If further evidence that the economic crisis of world capitalism is pushing the world's rulers towards war were needed then the events of the last month have provided it. What is most significant is the fact that the imperialist super-powers now openly declare that they are locked in mortal combat in every area of the globe. Today there are over forty local wars going on around the world. This in itself might be nothing new but the role of Russia and American intervention in them makes them permanent. Any one of them could spark off the final "Armageddon", which would really be "the war to end all wars".

### AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

But the favourite trigger point for a 3rd World War must still remain the Middle East. It is now clear that the lorry bombs in Beirut which killed nearly 300 French and US troops on 23rd October, a spasm of rage at US imperialism, was only a prelude on the margins of the USSR. By ordering this invasion Reagan wiped out the damage which these bombings had struck to his aggression policies on a world scale. Without the demonstration of America's armed might in Grenada the US Congress would probably have voted the withdrawal of US forces from the Lebanon within 40 days. The invasion was a practical demonstration of the American cliché that "nothing succeeds like success". And "success" was easily (though rather too bloodily) bought by rolling over a small island like Grenada. This was all part of Reagan's "publicly aggressive" though "privately conciliatory" policy against "the empire of evil", the USSR, which he has announced he will fight anywhere in the world. Having spurred on the French to get deeply involved in Chad, having sent marines to Grenada, Egypt, Honduras and the Lebanon, having carried out a series of strikes of Harriers and just about to deploy Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe, there is no doubt that Reagan is not merely talking.

### RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

And equally desperate is the other great imperialist power, the USSR. Its invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 was the first direct use of Russian troops beyond the areas

shows just how desperate Russian imperialism is becoming.

### LEBANON CIVIL WAR IS IMPERIALIST WAR

Perhaps the area where the USSR has suffered most in the last forty years is the Middle East. After the defeat of the Nazis in 1945 and the establishment of Israel in 1948 because they thought it would be anti-Western they lost their influence in Iraq and Egypt whilst being unable to impose their influence on the remnants in Libya and on the PLO. The lowest point of Russia's fortunes in the area was reached last year when the Israelis forced the PLO out of Beirut and humiliated the pro-Russian Syrian forces in Lebanon. (See "Reagan and Begin's New Order in the Middle East" in No. 8.) In fact it had not been for the economic and social crisis in Israel itself that Begin would probably have driven Syria from Lebanon. (See "Israel: New Conductor, Same Old Music" in this issue.) Since then, as we reported in the last *Workers Voice*, Russian military aid on a level not seen since the days of the bombing into Syria. It was to counter this, in the face of the withdrawal of the Israelis to southern Lebanon, that the so-called "international peace-keeping force" was sent into Beirut. But these doves of peace soon showed they were dogs of war by attacking friendly tanks and air bases of the pro-Moscow militia which are threatening to overthrow the pro-Western Gemayel government. The so-called civil war in Lebanon is in fact a struggle for control of a world imperialist war. In this sense it is just the same as the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 or the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, which were curtain raisers to the world wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45.

### WORLD WAR THREE?

What is happening in the Middle East, in Central America, in South Africa and in East Asia all raise the spectre of a new world imperialist war. As we have argued, since 1979 international tensions have risen to new heights and in every crisis there lurks the possibility of a more general conflict. Increasingly the preparations are being made. The fact that there was virtually no anti-war resistance in the Falklands war, the fact that mounting causal-



U.S. Marines  
Grenada today. Where tomorrow?

Continued on -

# BELGIAN WORKERS FIGHT BACK

An uneasy peace has returned to Belgium's streets after the September strikes in which over a million workers brought the country to a standstill.

The last actions of the Belgian workers can teach teachers in Britain a few lessons.

Belgium has a Right wing government which, like Britain's, has held down wages whilst inflation is running at 8%. It had already got away with wage freezes and record unemployment rates - the second highest in the EEC.

However, when the government tried to cut public spending by cutting bonuses and hold pay to state workers the strikes broke out.

Once again, as we see all over the world, the unions tried to prevent real class action (see too the article from Britain in this issue). The *Financial Times* (23.9.83), a mouthpiece of the British ruling class, revealed (naturally without realising it) exactly what was going on.

"Since September 9th the strikes in Belgium have paralysed the bureaucracy, brought public transport to an almost total halt, shut schools, ... and let rubbish accumulate in the streets. Yet they started spontaneously." (our emphasis)

This is the full story. The strike has been going on with the government for over a month now. About these attacks on the working class (involving a wage cut of over £2 a week on average). It was only when the workers were finally informed what was going on that the strikes broke out. A typical case was the railway workers in Charleroi. They stood to

the real function of the unions was fully revealed. To restore social peace, class calm and to sell the government's policies as the "only reasonable settlement" to the workers. The *Financial Times* concluded with a lesson for the bosses everywhere:

"If governments in general are to learn anything from the Belgian strike past mistakes in Belgium it is perhaps to be tough economic measures affecting the monthly pay packet cannot be introduced cold. The ground needs to be prepared. The measures when they are agreed need detailed and frequent explanation."

lose bonus pay, and when they expressed their anger in workplace meetings on September 9th the unions reluctantly agreed to a "strike off" in October. The unions always claim that this gives them a chance to "negotiate" but in fact it means that the workers are dispersed, the anger dies down and some patched up settlement in the bosses' interest is sorted out.

But at this particular time the workers nor other state workers, who belong to a variety of different unions, were conned. They immediately walked out. And it took a great effort by the unions involved to catch up with them. The *Financial Times* again:

"To regain control of the strike union leaders were forced to co-operate more closely than they have done in the past."

Behind the unions was the government in the person of the Minister of the Interior who accused them of being weak because they had no control over the workers.

So in a few brief days of the Belgian strike the real function of the unions was fully revealed. To restore social peace, class calm and to sell the government's policies as the "only reasonable settlement" to the workers. The *Financial Times* concluded with a lesson for the bosses everywhere:

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"back to work, lads!"

And whose role is this? In modern capitalist society this is precisely the function of the unions.

Belgian bosses have made a retreat, but with the capitalist crisis worsened, as it is everywhere, (bankruptcies, for example, have risen 20% in Belgium this year) they will be back with more vicious, if more subtle, attacks.

The lesson for the working class is that the spontaneous which produced the strike is not enough. Conscious political action to attack union efforts to get a return to work on the bosses' terms must be made. This requires the development of a communist party within the working class, inside workplaces.

## U.S. UNLEASHES DOGS OF WAR

Continued from pg 1

ties in Afghanistan has not provoked a social crisis in Russia and the fact that Reagan has won overwhelming support in the USA has lies about why he invaded Grenada show that our rulers can be fairly confident that they can manipulate public opinion and their direction of policy of any way. And that is precisely what they did. In the talk to limit nuclear weapons (the START and INF talks) both Andropov and Reagan have been manoeuvring. Each has been offering us arms reduction proposals which favour their own side (like Reagan's "Zero Option" of dismantling intermediate range missiles) and he is like Hitler in 1933. When France refused to disarm immediately to German levels at the Geneva Disarmament Conference he was free to walk out of the Conference and at the time he was reckoned to have been wronged. In order to prepare another war he could call his side "the aggressor". CND didn't oppose the Falklands War. Is their leader, Monsignor Bruce Kent proclaim that "We are the real patriots" since they are arguing not against the cause of war but against some of its effects. CND's precursors were no more successful than they have been today.

The neutrality League of the Hague Union disappeared the day war started in 1914 and 1919. However, by joining them the middle class can satisfy their consciences that they have put an intellectual protest before they go and fight for Queen and Country. The main factor though is the economic crisis. At present the capitalist crisis engulfing Britain and Russia (which is the most capitalist because the state rather than private firms exploits the working class) and its allies (e.g. Poland, Hungary) are increasingly feeling its effects. However, the ruling classes in both Eastern and Western bloc countries believe that they still hold a fading hope that the crisis can be solved economically by yet more austerity measures aimed at the working class. However, this illusion will not last for ever. The present crisis is grinding to its

inevitable conclusion, just as in the past capitalist slumps found their only "solution" in a new world war which, by destroying workers, commodities and places, enables accumulation to begin again on a higher level. This time, however, the cure is as bad as the disease.

### THE WORKING CLASS SOLUTION

So, after over a decade of lowering living standards, destroying the means of satisfying human needs, increasing unemployment, homelessness and starvation, the final misery capitalism has to offer is war. This cannot be prevented by CND marches. 2 million marched in European cities at the weekend of the events of Grenada and the Falklands. What about the US later? CND didn't oppose the Falklands War. Is their leader, Monsignor Bruce Kent proclaim that "We are the real patriots" since they are arguing not against the cause of war but against some of its effects. CND's precursors were no more successful than they have been today.

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### THE WORKING CLASS SOLUTION

ing that when Reagan decides to get tough US is no more interested in leaving weaker states to determine their own destiny than Russia was in Afghanistan. This of course, the Labour Party realises makes it harder to drum up working class support for the West in both world wars Labour and the trades have been the backbone of the war effort. Labour, it should not be forgotten, initiated the development of the British nuclear bomb. Neither CND nor the Labour Party can prevent, or in fact really wants to prevent, another imperialist war. That task must be to the working class itself. Over the world there is a growing consciousness of the working class and the trade unions. Their political activity and fighting every small decision of the bosses can help to give other workers confidence in "their" bosses can be beaten. Yet fighting effects of the capitalist crisis will not be enough. Indeed, rising levels of working class resistance, particularly among unemployed, could even provoke the working class. The bosses realise that their austerity policies have failed to overcome the crisis. At this point the answer cannot be to give up the flag but to extend and deepen it until the battle to defend living standards turns into a fight against the state itself. Only then can the class use all its capacity to wield the one sure weapon which can lead to the removal of the threat of imperialist war - and that is a communist revolution which will destroy the forces of the old state (including the armed forces) and pave the way for a new society without national frontiers and rivalries which lead to war.



## 4 Notes on Kurdistan and the Political forces in Iran

Translation from 'Battaglia Comunista' No. 11, July 1983

### Introduction

As regular readers of *Workers Voice* (and *Resistance* for that matter) will know the CWO has been conducting a series of polemics against the Iranian Supporters of the Unity of Communist Militants (SUCM) based in Britain. At the same time our comrades of the Partito Comunista Internazionale (PCI) have been carrying out a similar polemic. We are reprinting here an article from their paper *Battaglia Comunista* of last July which warns the SUCM about the dangers of fusion with Komala (The Toller's Revolutionary Organisation of Iranian Kurdistan). These warnings were ignored and the fusion UCM and Komala took place, which has led to the present state of纷争 since then taken place.

The non-communist basis of this formation will be examined in *Revolutionary Perspectives 21* (to be issued December 1983). Here we simply want to briefly outline our policy for relating to groups like the SUCM.

We reject all approaches as idealist and undialectical. We reject those童年 spirits who baited us as opportunist. We

have made NO CONCESSIONS to the mistakes of these groups. What we have done is to address ourselves to correct these errors and to patiently research developed critical replies.

This is not opportunism or selling out to the counter-revolution but the height of political responsibility. The process of criticism enables the class nature of these organisations to be exposed where there are no superstitious denunciations.

Finally, though it is not the purpose of this article to draw up a balance sheet of the debate with the SUCM, we wish to make it abundantly clear that the method we have adopted towards them is precisely the same as we shall adopt towards all other groups in the future. We

will not be diverted from trying to gain the widest possible hearing for communist ideas in every area of the globe by the infantile jibes of "pure" sectarians.

On the other hand the same social upheavals will give rise to new and immature political groups. Only a fully-convinced spontaneist could believe that these groups will spring into existence defending the class struggle alone in the same way that they have long enough for communists in Britain to understand the nature of the failure of the revolutionary wave after the First World War - and we were not without the help of comrades in other European countries. It would be incredible to think that groups from peripheral areas (Iran, Turkey, etc.) could form the European communist tradition would be able to cut through the entirety of counter-revolutionary politics overnight. What attitude should European communists then adopt to these groups?

Let us begin with, it seems sterile to present the problem in terms of whether these groups break "class lines" on any issue. Apart from the fact that these groups have arisen in areas with no Left Communist tradition, who do not possess a copy of *Capital* and most important do not consider Europe has failed in over a decade to establish a *cordon sanitaire* between them and the bourgeoisie by this method. Clearly groups like this which are breaking from the counter-revolution will carry some of the hallmarks of leftist thinking. In this sense, the social communists are closer to them than creating a situation of movement in which, under the impact of events and the detailed criticism of communist tendencies, their initial positive steps can be pushed further.

Each case will have to be judged on its merits. We must always treat a tendency which is formed by announcing its adherence to a bourgeois force like the 4th International in the same way as existing representatives of that tradition. But in the case of less defined groups where movement or confusion (or both) is clearly discernible it is our duty to assemble detailed and of the Khomeini regime, while at the same

time Iranian Kurdistan was subjected to one of the most violent and bloody attacks of Khomeini's troops. (Now the fortunes of the Tudeh are over and its leader has been shot in the internecine struggles for power in Iran.) At the same time the USSR is intriguing with the Kurdish nationalistic party and arming it against the Islamic regime. In this way the two classic forces stand a one foot in either camp, ready to side with whoever emerges victorious.

The KDP (Kurdish Democratic Party) is now part of the National Council for Resistance, which includes the bourgeois and petit bourgeois forces which are working for a replacement of the Islamic régime by a Democratic Islamic régime.

The purpose of the NCR, as is clear

from its programme, is the suppression of the

revolutionary movement and the continuation

of the dominance of imperialist capital in the

region.

And so the front of the forces that are

preparing to manage a new bourgeois régime is spreading.

In this case, what will happen in Kurdistan? Probably the administrative autonomy demanded by the influential Kurdish chief, Ezzedin Hosseini will be granted.

The same sheikh declines:

"We want to expand our influence in

addition to Pharsi. Not only at home but in

the offices and in the schools. We would

want to manage our own regional economy

according to our own demands, to choose

our own local authority instead of having to

accept that sent by a government,

completely foreign to our culture and way

of life."

Nothing so extraordinary or complex about that. Autonomy in economic management - what does it mean in reality? If, as has happened in Iraq, he is talking about left wing centrist demands concerning economic policies of control in the region to the bourgeois and latifundia Kurds, there is nothing in the world to prevent a Banu Sadr, for example, from conceding it.

But it is neither possible nor conceivable to a bourgeois Iranian government could concede to the Kurds more than the possibility of deciding what mass organs of social and

economic destiny of the region. Only a proletarian government, founded on the basis of the direct organs of power of the mass of workers and in the context of the proletarian dictatorship, could concede such a status "conceded" to the Kurds the most complete party of rights on this question, by means of its own process of centralisation. But this is exactly what the National Council of Resistance wants to avoid.

The backwardness, the poverty, the opportunity of the Kurdish masses are both the conditions and the product of the domination of capital in Iranian society, analogous to the destruction of the economic fabric of the South during the capitalist unification of Italy. There can be no solution to the misery and oppression of the Kurds outside a victorious revolution of the people inside the country.

And this is a crucial point for the commun movement, Iranian and international, which has not been fundamentally grasped - either in Iran or in the so-called European revolutionary "milieus". The same Komala and SUCM goes to its documents as a capital pledge tends to forget them in its actual policies and in its perspectives for action. Komala writes the following (Resolution of 2nd Congress of March 1981):

"The proletariat is conscious that it cannot negotiate with the bourgeoisie, the juntas and areas of revolutionary democracy. The Kurdish resistance movement cannot ensure victory over the bourgeoisie in the sense of transforming the relations of production in the region of Kurdistan. The liberation of part of the proletariat in Kurdistan is not possible in connection with the whole proletariat (in Iran)"

They must develop from here a policy of strict autonomy from the NCR, from the KDP, through effective preparation (political cadres, programmes) and in ways of relating to the masses of workers) for direct encounter with the forces of the bourgeoisie. What will happen if and when the Khomeini regime gives way to an Islamic Democratic Republic along the lines



Kurdish nationalist guerrilla  
where they have established the  
rule and oppression of the Kurds  
without a victorious revolution of  
the proletariat of Iran.

of Bani Sadr and his NCR? What will happen if Komala's position becomes clear? What will happen from these forces? What will happen is that Komala will find itself forced to choose between a coherent support for such a regime or a dramatic change of course (always difficult, let's remember) with consequent loss of its mass following, involving at that point defeat and the dispersal of the organisation itself.

These are two equally distasteful but inevitable perspectives if Komala (and UCM which is preparing to unite with Komala in the Communist Party of Iran) does not quickly correct its political oscillation between demands for revolution and demands for KDP.

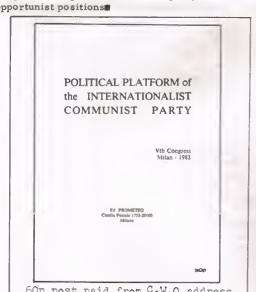
For example, what sense can be made of what was said by the foreign spokesman for Komala in the English newspaper, *Kurdistan News and Comment* of May 1983. Ardalan says:

"Regardless of our differences with the KDP, we always insist in uniting our actions against the Islamic regime, in order to escalate the revolution. In the social and educational fields, the customs, the welfare of the people, in the field of hygiene, we have tried to cooperate with the KDP-Iran, but our differences have continued. Nevertheless in the field of military offensives we've held some joint operations."

Obviously here is an attempt to get mixed up on dubious grounds with a counter-revolutionary force like the KDP which hits back in the manner of the US. This is the consequence of a dangerous confusion in Komala's political and theoretical positions and forces us straight back to ask the questions we have asked in discussion with UCM and SUCM. It underlines the validity of the warnings given to the comrades of the SUCM:

"The impending process of unification of UCM and Komala can become the basis of a regression on the part of UCM to the still largely 'immature' positions of the Kurdish organisation".

We wrote that in May (*Battaglia Comunista* 10). Today a clearer profile is emerging of the danger of a regression to more openly opportunist positions.



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The first real tremor in the Israeli economy came as a direct consequence of the costly Yom Kippur War of 1973. In 1977 the CWO slogan, inflation was up to 30-40% and the trade deficit was growing rapidly (Israel needs to import most of its raw

materials). In October 1977 Begin announced new economic measures. These included a 10% devaluation of the Israeli shekel, a drastic reduction in state subsidies which maintain low food prices and a wage restraint policy which led to mounting struggles by the working class.

Despite these measures, the situation kept on deteriorating and inflation continued to rise, even going beyond the level of 100%. Then, the government changed its mind: after a period

The Israeli government is paralysed by the costs of the war. It pulled out of Beirut because it could no longer maintain the economic cost or the social cost of discontent in Israel.

The Israeli economy, despite US loans, is in deep trouble. Interest rates are suspended on the stock market. The main currency, the shekel, is worthless and Israelis can no longer buy dollars (since they have been used up trying to support the shekel). In fact the Finance Minister, Aridor, who has been told by the government he wouldn't accept his plan to replace the shekel with the dollar as Israel's unit of currency was only recognising the reality of Israel's economic dependence on the USA and inflation of 160% a year.

The main aim of the Shamir government though, is to reach index linking of wages and prices. But to do this the Israeli ruling class needs to reach agreement on how best to attack the workers. Shamir can either involve the Histadrut (the Israeli TUC) to get them to persuade workers to accept this cut or he could get a national government with the opposition Labour Party to impose it in "the national interest".

How the Israeli workers respond to this coming attack is of great interest to workers everywhere, since it could blow a hole through the wall of nationalist ideology for which thousands of workers have sacrificed for decades.

The argument that the resignation of Begin as Prime Minister last September was due to personal reasons isn't very convincing. The image of the "old warrior" retiring after having given his life to the service of the fatherland is certainly an easy one - beyond the gloss of the tributes paid to Begin by the world's rulers lies the gloomy picture of the insoluble contradictions in which the Israeli economy, like the rest of the world, is embedded. In fact, expansionist policy carried on by the Israeli state for many years, especially from 1973 onwards, has just attempted to escape the problems created by a disastrous internal situation. The various wars against Egypt and Syria were a means of deflecting the attention of the working people in Israel from existing difficulties onto the external front, also strengthening the country's "security"; in order to defend itself against the hostile Arab world, the Israeli population was periodically asked to make greater sacrifices for the war effort of its own ruling class.

For a few short years Israel's internal crisis, the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, just as was the case for previous wars, further weakened the Israeli economy. In spite of massive aid from the United States, despite the fact that Israel could dump its goods on the Lebanese markets and use local resources of the occupied territories, signs of deterioration have shown considerably. It is in this context that we must place the political change at the head of the real tremor.

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of reduced state spending it turned, in 1979, to a policy of increased state spending in order to stimulate demand. It was now felt that the old method of balancing budgets would lead to greater consumption and thus higher state incomes. But this failed because growing demand led to an import surge with repercussions on the balance of payments deficit. Inflation was still 101% in 1981. It was agreed that it was better to go back to the "good old method" of wage restraint and tax increases.

In 1982, while the media was hailing the war deeds of the Israeli army settling accounts with Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon, the Begin government introduced a new plan: VAT increases, new taxes, the price of subsidised goods rose by 5% a month and the shekel was devalued. Instead of declining inflation rose to 131%. In addition, a forced loan was created to pay for maintaining the Israeli army in Lebanon.

As a result of these measures, inflation has improved the situation of the Israeli economy by the end of 1982 Israel's foreign debt reached 22 billion dollars and inflation was still at a high level (130%).

The cost of the war in Lebanon has dramatically worsened the situation of the working class in Israel. The strike of the El Al workers last year showed that the local ruling class has not been able to mobilise workers behind the slogan of "national unity". This has been confirmed by desertions and demonstrations against the war. For the time being it is the petty bourgeoisie class that has not emerged as a politically independent force, since the petty bourgeoisie has largely succeeded in transforming workers' resistance to sacrifices into a fight for "democracy", "peace", etc... But the growing deterioration in material conditions of working people in Israel will erode the objective basis for a clear separation of interests between the existing classes. An essential contribution to this process of clarification will be the emergence of a revolutionary minority, which can link the condition of the Israeli working class and its struggle to the condition and struggles of all the oppressed people in the area, for a united fight against all bourgeois factions as part of the struggle of the proletariat for its emancipation on a world scale.

# LETTERS

## The Law of Value

Dear Editor

In issue no. 12 you explained the Marxian law of value. I'm currently struggling with Marx's 'magnum opus', and I found your approach to the subject very effective. However, I'm stuck with a paradox.

If the total (value of) goods produced by society over a given period are sold at their value (value measured by labour time) and the total labour expended in their production is paid for its value as labour power (i.e. value of maintenance and reproduction of labour), then it follows that the value of goods produced is greater than the wages and salaries that go to make them.

For example, let's say that total consumer output of society for a given period is T. Let T be subdivided into the following elements: value of constant capital Xc; value of wages/ salaries Yw; value of surplus Zs. Then,  $T = Xc + Yw + Zs$ .

But the total purchasing power is only equal to  $Xc + Yw$ .

On the other hand, the portion of goods represented by  $Xc + Zs$  have to be sold to realize any profit. Who is to buy these goods?

It would seem, prima facie, that capitalism is on the basis of the Labour Theory of Value, is an impossibility.

Where am I going wrong?

R.A. Manchester

Dear Comrade

Thank you very much for your letter explaining the paradox you have reached in your understanding of the law of value. We found the clear way you have posed your problem particularly useful.

Let me first point out that Marx asks "who is to buy these goods?" (i.e. the goods produced over and above the value of the workers' wages) is the same one as was asked by Rosa Luxemburg at the turn of the century? Luxemburg's answer was to declare that Marx was wrong. Volume II Capital shows he showed that capitalism creates its own market.

She went on to produce her own theory of accumulation based, not on the law of value, but on the sale of goods to pre-capitalist markets - i.e. she denied that capitalism could continue to exist in a situation where there were only capitalists and workers. As you say, if the law of value is to explain capitalist accumulation, then the profits of the capitalist accumulation cannot exist (or at least Marx's analysis and the law of value can be disregarded). But, as Bukharin pointed out in reply to Luxemburg, and as the CWO has explained to modern-day Luxemburgists in *Marxian Perspectives*, this is wrong. Wrong with Marx's explanation of expanded reproduction in Volume II. The problem of how capitalism realises its profits is easily solved by the law of value once the importance of the total social product being divided into two departments of production is grasped. This is probably where you are going wrong.

If, like Marx, we divide the total social product (and therefore the total surplus value) produced in a given period into Department I, producing means of production (machinery, plant, etc.) and Department II, producing consumer goods, then there must be some exchange between the two departments for both the workers and capitalists to survive. The capitalists and workers in Dept. I can't consume machinery and plant, while on the other hand the capitalists in Dept. II can't replace their worn out equipment and install new machinery from the consumer goods produced in the other department.

If we break down the surplus value produced in both departments into that part which must go to replace constant capital (c), the part that must replace variable capital or wages (v) and a surplus (s), the total social product can be shown as follows:

$$\text{Department I: } Ic + Iv + Is$$

$$\text{Department II: } IIc + IIV + IIS$$

For simple reproduction to take place - i.e. simply for worn out machinery to be replaced, for workers to have food and clothes and for the capitalists to have their wages - some of the surplus value produced in each department must go to the other department.

Thus, the constant capital in Dept. I can be replaced from the surplus value produced in that

Dept. But the variable capital (Iv) and the surplus (Is) in Dept. I are no good in the form of capital equipment. They must be exchanged for consumer goods from Dept. II. In Dept. II itself constant capital (IIc) cannot be replaced while the surplus value is still in the form of consumer goods; this must be exchanged for goods from Dept. I. Thus, so long as the surplus value exchanged between the two departments is equal to the capital accumulation produced by themselves, Marx's formula for simple reproduction is therefore:  $Iv + Is = IIc$ .

You can see there is now no problem about who is going to buy the goods destined to realise the constant and surplus capital. (Although Marx didn't deny that sporadic problems could and did occur because of imbalances between the two departments).

When Marx goes on to explain expanded reproduction (i.e. capitalist accumulation) the law of value still holds. This time we must not only divide the value produced in each department into constant and variable capital but we must also ask "who is to buy these goods?" (i.e. the goods produced over and above the value of the workers' wages) is the same one as was asked by Rosa Luxemburg at the turn of the century?

Luxemburg's answer was to declare that Marx was wrong. Volume II Capital shows he showed that capitalism creates its own market. She went on to produce her own theory of accumulation based, not on the law of value, but on the sale of goods to pre-capitalist markets - i.e. she denied that capitalism could continue to exist in a situation where there were only capitalists and workers. As you say, if the law of value is to explain capitalist accumulation, then the profits of the capitalist accumulation

cannot exist (or at least Marx's analysis and the law of value can be disregarded). But, as

Bukharin pointed out in reply to Luxemburg, and as the CWO has explained to modern-day Luxemburgists in *Marxian Perspectives*, this is wrong. Wrong with Marx's explanation of expanded reproduction in Volume II. The problem of how capitalism realises its profits is easily solved by the law of value once the importance of the total social product being divided into two departments of production is grasped. This is probably where you are going wrong.

If, like Marx, we divide the total social product (and therefore the total surplus value) produced in a given period into Department I, producing means of production (machinery, plant, etc.) and Department II, producing consumer goods, then there must be some exchange between the two departments for both the workers and capitalists to survive.

The capitalists and workers in Dept. I can't consume machinery and plant, while on the other hand the capitalists in Dept. II can't replace their worn out equipment and install new machinery from the consumer goods produced in the other department.

If we break down the surplus value produced in both departments into that part which must

go to replace constant capital (c), the part that

must replace variable capital or wages (v)

and a surplus (s), the total social product can

be shown as follows:

$$\text{Department I: } Ic + Iv + Is$$

$$\text{Department II: } IIc + IIV + IIS$$

For simple reproduction to take place - i.e.

simply for worn out machinery to be replaced,

for workers to have food and clothes and for

the capitalists to have their wages - some

of the surplus value produced in each depart-

ment must go to the other department.

Thus, the constant capital in Dept. I can be

replaced from the surplus value produced in that

Dept. But the variable capital (Iv) and the

surplus (Is) in Dept. I are no good in the form

of capital equipment. They must be exchanged

for consumer goods from Dept. II. In Dept. II

itself constant capital (IIc) cannot be replaced

while the surplus value is still in the form of

consumer goods; this must be exchanged for

goods from Dept. I. Thus, so long as the sur-

plus value exchanged between the two depart-

ments is equal to the capital accumulation pro-

duced by themselves, Marx's formula for

simple reproduction is therefore:  $Iv + Is = IIc$ .

You can see there is now no problem about who

is going to buy the goods destined to realise the

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# Fake Union Militancy in French Postal Strike

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We are publishing this letter from a CWO comrade who works in the French postal service. Not only does it highlight dramatically some of the ways in which the trade unions divide workers and the hostility with which they greet proposals for an effective fight; it also shows the need for revolutionaries to put forward alternative policies within each workplace. The right of workers to self-organisation, to act at first on their own initiative and to listen to us at first is not so important. What is important is that communist workers stand out against the unions in the present day-to-day skirmishes with the bosses and provide a focal point for the growth of internationalist workplace groups which in turn will provide the basis for leading a real fight in the struggles which lie ahead.

Dear Comrades,

During the past three weeks I have been involved in the various stoppages at work. Some of them are still going on in the PTT (French postal service) in the Paris region.

First of all, it is necessary to stress the fact that not all postmen have struck. The movement has simply hit the sorting offices - those "on the roads" were ignored by the unions who wanted to avoid any national strike which could have had a general character. Secondly the strike chose the most sectional aspects of the situation of the workers in the PTT (workplace problems), never mind the wage freeze of last year, the increase in taxes - the 1% tax on wages to finance job creation schemes, the 1% to fill the Social Security deficit, the 1% to finance the pension system. No mention of the fact that there is a decline in wages in 1982 and 1983 did not match the rate of inflation (there has been a 5% decline in the purchasing power of workers' wages this year in France).

Thirdly, action has been limited to token stoppages of 1 hour for each shift or half shift, with the advantage for the bosses that it was impossible to organise flying pickets to try to get support from other workers. Thus, workers were quite easily locked in the workplace, playing cards or football, or basking in the sun and leaving the unions a free hand to organise interminable rounds of negotiations with local bosses.

This kind of movement has hit almost every sorting office in France but not all at the same time. The Union view of how to struggle was quite well expressed by a Trotskyist (LCR) in an assembly in Lille when he said that success was dependent on 1) sending "communiques" to the press and radio stations to inform public opinion 2) organisability to negotiate 3) eventually consulting trade unions in other workplaces about the possibility of extension and co-ordination of the movement!

From the start the unions tried to make this strike a conflict between sorting office workers and the local PTT administrator who was portrayed as an inflexible and reac-

tory boss, not "open to dialogue". When the strike began in mid-September the unions wanted to limit it to 1 hour token stoppages at the end of the working time. But when their negotiations did not appear to "progress" they decided on picketing (1 hour alternating pickets). Then the PTT opened another sorting office in the Lille suburbs towards which all mail was directed and threatened to introduce short time working for those who remained at work. The two unions sent a joint telegram to the PTT boss in Lille asking to re-establish normal "traffic", and told him that it was necessary to return to work in order to avoid a lock-out.



"... workers were quite easily locked in the workplace, playing cards or football, or basking in the sun and leaving the unions a free hand to organise interminable rounds of negotiations with local bosses."

I was able to intervene a lot in union meetings I descended the union hierarchies, saying that I had spoken to many workers and picketing was useless and that it was up to the workers themselves to decide on strike action if they wanted it. In fact the unions wanted above all to refurbish their tarnished image through a show of militancy in the context of elections to Social Security councils (run jointly by bosses and unions). Given the fact that the friends of the Socialist and Communist Parties in the unions chose the most sectional problem to serve as a basis for agitation, that of "reduction" of the working week in the sorting offices from 38 to 37 hours. But this was a trick, since the PTT administration wanted to reduce the working week through cutting of the time spent in getting to the job which was 1 hour.

The LCR explained that it was necessary to include the Left government in the PTT in the context of current problems in the PTT in the context of attacks by the Left government against the working class. It was therefore important to link present problems to others faced by the working class as a whole in the form of tax increases, cuts in social services, productivity increases and lay-offs. We were facing these attacks alone, as postmen. Only by such understanding was it possible to take the struggle out of the workplace and try to establish links with workers elsewhere, not only those "on the roads", but also those of the tractor factory near Lille (Massey Ferguson) facing the sack, or else those of the Thomson factory suffering continuous one-time working since the beginning of the year.

Obviously solidarity action could not be achieved through 1 hour token stoppages and passive picketing. It was necessary to either organise flying pickets to block the "scab sorting offices" on the outskirts, or else to get solidarity from the other workers in Lille, since if they struck there would be nobody to distribute the mail. Once this was done there would be a need to co-ordinate action with other sorting offices; such a task could not be left in

the hands of the unions, it was up to the workers themselves to organise this and control it.

As usual, I was attacked by union stewards as a dangerous "terrorist", as a "Red" and they were followed in this by the majority of the workforce. Just a small minority shared my perspective. Having "democratically" decided on picketing as a means of the strike, the unions led it easily to defeat, as was predictable and as I predicted from the start. After three weeks of stoppages they called for a return to work and the bosses have enforced their plans which will increase productivity, discipline, work loads per head. The unions claim to have won the strike because they got a day off than at the beginning. But it's not a victory at all since, given the compulsory character of these days off, smaller shifts will do the work of a normal one, in fact the result is an increase in exploitation, just as the bosses wanted.

However, now that work has begun again, some of the workers who followed the unions feel they have won a victory, and they are slightly disillusioned union stewards. This is just a first step, but they belatedly recognised that they had been trapped and locked in by union tactics. Last Thursday the unions were attacked by workers who said that they had agreed on proposals which would not serve the interests and demands formulated by the workers. I intervened in this meeting, drawing a balance sheet of the strike, explaining the weaknesses and pointing to the means of overcoming them by going beyond the union framework. I added that picketing was not an end in itself; to go on striking is not the aim of the strike. The aim of the strike, it doesn't mean remaining passive and leaving control of the strike in the hands of the unions. It's useless to close the gates of your workplace when mail is being sorted elsewhere and your workmates "on the roads" are disrupting it. Further, any strike must seek coordination with other sectors in the public as well as the private sector. In the case of the PTT strike there was no co-ordination of the movement and the unions did their best to prevent any such thing. Thus when Lille struck Amiens was working, when Amiens went back to work sorting offices in the Paris region and in particular the Parisian strike action, a strike after having been led back to work under pressure from the unions.

In short, I tried to draw the major lessons of the movement, giving political orientation to delineate working class interests from those of the unions, which are those of the bourgeoisie. \*

## GUST OUT

"Le Marxisme et la Question Syndicale"  
Available from Group Addresses:  
U.K. 50p, France 4F Postage paid.

**C.W.O.**

Unemployment, inflation, war  
now's not the time for sitting around and doing nothing.

I would like to find out more about the C.W.O. ...

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Name .....  
Address .....  
.....  
.....

Send to: C.W.O., P.O.Box 145,  
Head Post Office, Glasgow.

# WORKERS VOICE

## Unions Sabotage Workers' Fightback. BOSSES' ATTACK

### BOSSES ON THE ATTACK

#### UNIONS AGAINST WORKERS

1980 marked a turning point in the recent history of the British working class. With the defeat of the steelworkers the bosses and the state were able to force through massive redundancies, drastic wage cuts, productivity deals and in some cases a lockout. Many workers, for instance, have been told that they will be laid-off. Then they find that "their" factory has been taken over by a multinational corporation which will re-employ some of them in a "similar role" (i.e., their old job) for 5% of the wages and longer hours (usually about 10 hours).

There is no doubt that the bosses thought the Tory election victory was the green light to go ahead with even more savage attacks on jobs, wages and working conditions. British Shipbuilders have tried to get by without giving workers pay rises for two years. Vauxhall offered only 5% a year after a nil wage rise last year. The National Coal Board has begun threatening to close pits and cut miners' work harder as the pit will close, whilst British Telecom has revived the bosses' old tactic of a lockout to try to defeat the telephone engineers' opposition to privatisation. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

#### WORKERS FIGHT BACK

What has surprised the unions has been the fact that workers are no longer accepting these attacks as natural disasters. They are no longer listening when the bosses threaten them with the loss of their jobs. A great example here was at Sunderland Shipbuilders where 1,600 men went on strike because some workers got a pay rise. The firm threatened them that if they didn't return to work then an order for the Falklands would be lost and they would lose their jobs. In addition to this threat went the old sob story that they were "unpatriotic" in not helping the "guys out there" (*Guardian* 11.10.83). To their eternal credit the workers realised that the bosses' real interest was in their own interest and remained uncompromised by these appeals and threats. Similarly, at the modern Monkton Hall colliery near Edinburgh, 1,500 men went on strike for a fortnight to show what they thought of NCB threats to sack 300 of them unless productivity improved. There have been a host of other struggles in recent months. Nigg steel workers at Highfield Fabricators fought a fierce battle in London where British Telecom workers have been locked out by management. These struggles may as yet not amount to much, but in the context of the last three years they show that workers with their backs to the wall can, and will, fight back regardless of immediate consequences.

Workers have shown that they don't fear capital if workers didn't go on strike "...they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation". And as Marx went on to say, "By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement."

But to start any larger movement the working class will have to break out of the union prison. We haven't heard much about the unions in Britain recently. Now that the working class has gone quiet the capitalist press obviously no longer thinks unions are public enemy number 1 and all we hear about is Len Murray's visit to the government on how best to keep the workers quiet. Murray recently informed us that "unions exist to prevent strikes" and the *Observer* (30.10.83) agrees:

"...union officials intervene in unofficial strikes to gain control of them and in response to the pleas of the employer who wants to reach a settlement."

In other words, as soon as workers begin to struggle then the unions stir themselves to make sure things don't get out of hand. How unions work was shown in two different ways in the struggles of the Barnsley miners and the Vauxhall workers.

At Barnsley coalfield 15 out of 16 pits

and 15,000 miners came out in support of one

worker who was transferred to another colliery

after hitting a pit deputy. The strike lasted over

a week and cost the NCB £7m. The so-called militant Yorkshire NUM area council

in the hands of the union negotiators. And whilst they waited the unions mobilised every tactic to demoralise them and weaken their resolve. First, the AUEW leader, Duffy, appealed for a return to work and when this failed a secret ballot was carried out amongst 1,000 miners. 95% voted to accept who accepted the firm's first offer. When this attempt to split the workers had little result and the stewards rigged the counting of the vote in the mass meeting at Luton to accept a "final" offer. This left many workers angry and shouting about a "sell-out".

#### THE WAY FORWARD

But such "sell-outs" are part of the unions' role. They exist to maintain wages with the bosses. If capitalism didn't exist, if the wages system was abolished, unions would have no role to play. Thus unions always want to keep the struggle for wages in their hands. In fact it was noticeable how in the "unofficial" Barnsley strike the workers not only went against the union but soon came out against the forces of law and order. Once this starts then a strike begins to question the role of capitalism itself. The possibility of the "bigger movement" which Marx spoke of exists. In the Vauxhall strike no such danger appeared because the unions kept the strike firmly under their control.

Now workers are individuals, beginning to realise that the union exists to take the struggle from time to time and to pop up in strikes to act as a hindrance to the growth of a real struggle. However, individual disillusionment leads nowhere. Only a continuous, collective fight against the unions on a daily basis will enable other workers to truly appreciate the fact that unions will not defend the "national interest" against their interests, will always prioritise jobs and real wage increases. In the last resort they will mobilise to support imperialist war just as they did in 1914 and 1939. The fight against unions is therefore a political fight - and the weapon for this fight is the factory groups of internationalist communists joining or forming these workers' groups to be able to strike.

I provide a centre of constant activity against the unions where lessons from each struggle are remembered and passed on from factory to factory.

2. formulate demands which, unlike those posed by the unions, will be able to unite all workers across sectional divisions.

3. form political education meetings with other workers to develop political understanding and skill in intervening in mass meetings so that workers do not leave the struggle to union leaders.

4. understand that every strike contains the seed of a wider struggle against the capitalist system itself.

All this leads to the building of an internationalist communist party in the workplaces - to lead the fight to destroy capitalism for ever!

**SEND FOR:**  
Factory Group Platform of the CWO.  
30p post paid.



"...start any larger movement, the working class will have to break out of the union prison..."

voted 67 votes to 3 to support the NCB and Jack Taylor (Steghill's chosen heir) was "unavailable" during the struggle. Meanwhile, the workers took the struggle into their own hands and when over 80 pickets turned up at South Kirby the NCB called on the police "to enforce Tebbit's Laws". The NCB was stillified.

"The Barnsley miners must stand the change of attitude among branches in the Barnsley area which had supported the decisions of their leadership for years." (*Guardian* 20.9.83)

In other words, the workers forced the bosses to backtrack by ignoring the union and showed that they are a long way from being "broken wretches". At Vauxhall it was a different story.

Whereas in Barnsley one pit had come out after another because pickets were round explaining the issues, in the Vauxhall struggle this didn't happen. To start with, 5 out of 6 workers voted for action in mass meetings round the country but then left the "struggle"

# WORKERS VOICE

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- ASTURIAS SOVIET
- RACIALISM

**COMMUNIST WORKERS ORGANISATION**

NOV/DEC 1984

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## MINERS STRIKE AT THE CROSSROADS

Each day that passes increases the significance of the miners strike. The endurance, solidarity and combative vigour of the 130,000 miners on strike has been an inspiration to workers everywhere. Not only in Britain, but also where it has encouraged Leyland, Vauxhall, Ford and others to take up the fight against austerity, but from Japan and Poland to Belgium. From the British miners' cause has sprung a world-wide movement of miners, in temporarily pushing back the counter-attack of the bosses, will encourage other workers to rise. Their defeat will make the bosses unable to sustain their attack. The real fight of the miners is the fight of the whole working class. As the strike enters the winter months, the struggle to defend the miners and government are beginning to pass. But as the chances of victory increase, so too do the dangers facing the class.

The effectiveness of the strike was already worrying the bosses, before the decision of the NACDS men to strike was made. The slashing of the price of oil by the government and the fall in the value of the pound in mid-October showed that, for the first time the ruling class both in Britain and abroad was losing confidence in the ability of Thatcher's government to defeat the miners. The effects of a strike by the miners, the pit men would have ended all coal production, hastened the depletion of stocks and increased the cost of living. The ruling class had to change plant and machinery. From the beginning NACDS was desperate to avoid a strike, and finally called it off trusting that the craft identity of its members would ensure their loyalty. In this it has acted like the other unions, in particular the ISTC and BEPUs which have ensured the miners isolation. While removing the miners from the strike, the increasing coal imports will be enough to avoid a crisis in power generation over the winter period. After the miners were beaten by open-cast miners to ban coal movements.

### From Within and Without

Despite all the talk by government ministers of coal stocks last autumn, it is clear that the government and coal board have one option open to ensure a defeat of the miners on the scale that Corbywood was closed. That is the option of the police to ban coal movements in the first instance to the power stations. This is the meaning of the sudden police action in stopping miners in Yorkshire selling pithead coal

to sustain the strike. And while it was possible to maintain a steel works such as Rotherham by convoys of scab lorries from private firms, keeping the power stations open could only be done by a large scale military operation. Eventually, possibly concentrating on key stations, so that a symbolic defeat is inflicted on the miners without killing them. At that point the question of victory or defeat will be in the balance.

In that context the crucial issue will be for the miners to expand their strike to force workers not to handle coal stocks. In addition to increasing electricity output from oil and gas, not coal. Indeed, the latter demand should already be met. There must be a significant increase in generation from these sources has already taken place, with the biomass strike supporting BEPUs. Mass picketing of the power stations will be necessary to enforce this demand, but it needs to be accompanied by active appeals for solidarity and maximum participation in the struggle. As we said in a recent leaflet on the strike:

"No amount of militant fight by the miners alone will defeat the bosses who have ranged the whole of the right wing capitalist state against the miners; they have spent more on defeating the miners, than in fighting the miners themselves. The miners must spread the struggle to every section of the working class. The use of token supporters, the miners need more active help like local strikes, joint picketing, demonstrations etc. Everywhere workers are facing the SAME problems as the miners: demands of redundancy, falling real wages, increasing increases in exploitation...

Any attempt to generalise and unite the struggle like this can only be done with the trades unions, which divide the workers section by section, and restrain any struggle within the bounds acceptable to capitalism. Thus the ISTC and BEPUs have long been a barrier of the miners, which are designed to have them ISOLATED. The ISTC has openly supported the use of police-escorted scab coal convoys,

and the BEPUs has indicated that it will call upon police workers to come out to defeat the miners. "Victory" says "solidarity" says nothing. says NOTHING while millions of tons of Polish coal floods into east coast ports, to ease the debt of the insolvent Polish state capitalists. Solidarity is a double game: class struggle talk on the one hand, while on the other channelling the strike into a dead end, hand in hand with the Labour government, hand in hand with Thatcher. Workers, don't forget that Sun closed more pits from 75-77 than had happened, and that was because of the miners' strike, not the miners productivity deal of 1977, which divided workers against miners, and led to today's swindle by the miners' leaders. The miners forced this through AGAINST the miners' ballot by the miners. The Labour Party, trades unions and "Communist" Party stand exposed as the LEFT WING OF CAPITALISM, fighting NOT for socialism, but for STATE CAPITALISM."

### Violence and the Struggle

The role of the unions in hamstrung the class struggle has been shown in their attitude to the growing violence. The idea that to oppose violence would simply lead to a miners' rebellion, NUM leadership have instead recuperated it through their apparent endorsement of it. In our last leaflet we welcomed the miners' break from the violence displayed by the miners and hailed their break with legality as a great step forward.

"Over the past weeks we have seen the miners abandoning the tired, useless framework of trade union "legality", and engaging in guerrilla actions which are embryonic civil war... Guerrilla actions have been directed to bomb lorry depots carrying coal blacked by railmen, and KCS property has been systematically destroyed... In many pit villages attacks on police stations have been carried out which the near destruction at Fixmill and Maltby were only the most spectacular..."

The miners in their increasing use of organisation and self-reliance are moving the way towards civil war, and their actions are to be welcomed. Communists must call for their identification and generalisation."

But above all, a communist intervention is to develop and adapt tactics as the strike develops, to emphasise at particular times what the issues are, and to formulate a strategy for continuing the struggle forward. To simply repeat abstract lists of all the various demands regardless of the dynamic of the struggle itself is only moralising. Thus we see that the situation in

## Editorial US ELECTIONS

# DEMOCRACY PREPARES AUSTERITY

rule class, and are of no importance-except as manoeuvres to be exposed to the U.S. working class.

This month sees the myth of democracy enacted in its most odious form, in the shape of an American presidential election, with all the racism and philistinism that accompanies this kind of travesty of political process. Once again the American masses are called upon to acquiesce, as atomised citizens, in their own exploitation and the preparations for the next phase of capitalist expansion. After the election, the U.S. ruling class will continue with their attacks on the living standards of the American workers, and with their relentless attacks on the working class. And this will be legitimised as the "will of the people" by the electoral charade.

In the likely event of the re-election of Reagan or the Republicans, the U.S. will continue in its policy of military preparation and armed confrontation with the real or supposed surrogates of Russian imperialism in Central America, South Africa and elsewhere. Economically, however, the present U.S. policies of high interest rates and high budget deficits would lead to repercussions that could shatter the foundations of the capitalist system, disrupting several of its members, as we outlined in detail in WY 17, in "The Crisis of Financial Capitalism". Despite the election short-term political gains will be made, which will set off inflationary measures pursued, by means of tax increases and a rise in unemployment. A similar economic policy would be pursued by the Democrats if they were to win, to support the Western alliance and outflank the Russians by trying to build "democratic" agents of U.S. imperialism while still, as did the Carterites, claim to be anti-imperialist and disarmament. The political parties in the election thus represent differing factions within the U.S.

One fact that is significant and positive, is that more than in any other country, elections in the U.S.A. are largely a middle-class affair. The middle class, in the main, has abstention amongst workers, both black and white, is enormous. But realisation that both parties are parties of millionaires, and that the U.S. ruling class is controlled by a few families far removed from the positive awareness of the need to destroy the state, including its "democratic" apparatus, and to create an alternative to the capitalist system, despite the brief appearance of Soviets in many American cities (notable Seattle) in the great flights of 1970-71, and despite its quite unparalleled history of violent economic battles with the U.S. working class, has never been fully accepted or consciousness. This is a living proof, as was the history of the British working class in the nineteenth century, that economic struggle does not produce class consciousness. For not themselves produces, class consciousness. The weight of the U.S. proletariat, which makes up four-fifths of the world's industrial output, can and must be mobilised. This movement needs no emphasising; what does is the urgent need to create a communist vanguard in America.

In Britain, the real conflict in U.S. society continues, with strikes emerging in the coal and auto industries. The increasing attack that will be made on living standards by the U.S. ruling class, will bring further worker struggles, and the possibilities of revolutionary intervention, hastening the day when the whole barbaric political superstructure of American capitalism can be destroyed, along with its economic foundations.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

Due to messages on the miners strike in Motherwell and Barrhead the October Glasgow meeting on the Iran-Iraq War was postponed. We apologise for any inconvenience. This meeting: THE IRAN - IRAQ WAR AND THE WORKING CLASS will now be held at the beginning of December. Contact Glasgow for details and watch for local advertising.

Regular readers meetings also take place in Northern England to discuss our publications. The next meeting will be in LEEDS on Wednesday Nov. 21st at 8.00 p.m. in  
Leeds Trades Club  
Savile Mount, Leeds 7.

For meetings in the London area contact our London address.

## positions of the C.W.O.

\* Every country in the world today is capitalist - including the so-called Communist states (for example Russia and China).

\* Trade unions and shop stewards cannot defend the interests of the working class.

\* The struggle for communism cannot be waged through Parliament, but must be carried out through workers' councils with recallable delegates.

\* The working class can only come to power through the creation of its own political party: the international communist party.

\* The capitalist system is in crisis and irretrievable decline. It can only offer inflation and unemployment and it cannot be reformed. The only choice for the future is war or revolution:  
BARBARISM or COMMUNISM

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## APPEAL FUND

The deepening of the crisis and the corresponding aim of communists to deepen their interventions in the working class, means an increasing burden on the financial resources of the C.W.O. We are totally dependent on the contributions of our members, supporters and sympathisers, practical and financial.

We appeal to our readers to help us in any way they can. Any donations, large or small, will help maintain and broaden our work.

**BRITISH MINERS** (cont. from page 1)  
regard to the violence has abated, and the NUM has largely recuperated this, just as it recuperated flying pickets. The NUM has turned violence into a tactic of confrontation with the police and politicians. In this sense, during the second dockers strike, we saw thousands of pickets confronting one or two others returning to work, instead of being directed to those docks where there had been no strike. Real workers violence continues, e.g. at Bishop Auckland, miners have been attacked for their reign of terror in the village. But the supplemenses of the NUM, in controlling the miners, whose loyalty it retains, has once again been demonstrated.

The majority of the striking miners still see the strike as a "miners affair", and belt-tightening as the key to victory. While they will probably accept this, they do not need for generalisation, not seeing that 1976 is not 1974, and conditions today are less favourable to the miners. However, a militant minority exists which want to extend the strike, and may, sees, confusedly, the need to broaden the struggle despite their illusion that the NUM leadership share their perspectives. It is this group which can be won over to the communists, especially power workers, to spread the struggle, and it is through their actions that the possibility of breaking from union control can arise. As the miners are the most militant for such a minority to have the sanction of elected strike committees to carry out the violence, neither is it necessary for them to operate under such formal methods of organisation as the strike committee. Indeed, in present conditions, elected strike committees would simply dilute the most advanced workers into a passive majority who are not prepared to break from union control. The "formal" break with the union cannot come until the political conditions for it exist. These political conditions are maturing, as the miners' strike has shown, and the control of the strike. It will be hard for the NUM and the miners to concoct a scheme to get an orderly return to work. After having struggled so long, and having fought for a miners-only strike scheme, modified and disguised as a victory, the intervention of ACAS, and the possibility, already floated in the NACOS talks, of an ACAS "review body" to sack miners, and pit closures, offers one possibility for a NUM/ACAS deal. After this, pits could be picked off one by one, with the likelihood of another massive regional strike in each case.

As the strike nears an end, the demands of the workers will change, to a rejection of any ACAS "review body", to the sacking of ACAS within the pits, and the sacking of miners and others, and to a scrapping of the infamous 1978 advertising deal. At the moment, however, the main priority of the strike is to direct all available resources to the power stations.

Whether the struggle wins (by which we mean temporarily halts the bourgeoisie on the class) or loses, the real gains will be the alteration of the balance of forces it has wrought in Britain, and in whether the political lessons on the role of the state, and the role of the trade unions, as well as the question of the organisation of future struggles, are assimilated by the most advanced elements of the class.

## COMMUNIST REVIEW

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- Where we have come from and where we are going
- Platform and Statutes of the British CP
- On the formation of the Communist Party of Iran
- Crisis and imperialism

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# IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ASTURIAS SOVIET

## INTRODUCTION

Fifty years ago the miners of the Asturias rose against the Spanish Republic in a massive display of proletarian self-organisation and intensity. In this article we look at their heroic acts and draw the lessons for the coming wave of class struggle

capitalist ownership. Power was based on local workers' committees, with the aid of the most proletarian, and censorship was generally redistributed without any kind of formalities." (G. Manóz, *Jalones de derrota: premisa de victoria*, p.157. [OD translation])

Due to all the conflicts of the Spanish Civil War, the Madrid Government resorted to a 40,000 strong force of Franco's Foreign Legion and Moorish Troops. Despite its artillery and brutality (all prisoners were shot on capture) this could not stop the rapid progress in the coastal areas. In the mountain passes of Asturias the miners held firm.

And just as the Socialist leaders in Madrid were betraying the struggle they had called for so too did the Socialist deputies desert the working class, leaving leaders to defend that "there would be no civil war". As these socialist quickly told the Asturian workers to lay down their arms and then escaped, leaving the workers to their fate. The workers, who had been fighting a revolutionary committee which was now "made up of the most advanced of the Asturian proletariat" (Munis) instead of the capitalist line seen in the unequal struggle between the miners and Franco's troops began to run out of ammunition and it became clear to the workers that nowhere else in Spain

they should have revolutionary future when they collaborated with the military leadership of Miguel Primo de Rivera (under whom the PSOE leaders became members of the Labor and农夫 parties) and an alliance with the periles of the leaders of Spanish Capitalism (the second ranked Socialist, Prieto, was himself a millionaire, to form the United Left). In 1933, when they were in power and called out troops to massacre a pathetic millenarian uprising by destitute anarchist labourers in Cerdanya, leaving 100 dead and their working class across Spain, as elsewhere workers illusions in the old periles remained. Cesáreo Viéjas led to the collapse of the first coalition government in 1934, and the PSOE, like all labour parties in opposition tried to control its working class base by becoming more radical in its rhetoric. During 1934 there was a fourth labour front alliance" with other left-wing organisations in an attempt to blot out the memory of its record in government. The highpoint of these radical words was the slogan "no conscripts", which had not taken an oath of allegiance to the Spanish Republic looked as though it might get into the government. Largo Caballero, the PSOE leader, was nominated to administer what did happen. But the Workers Alliance did nothing to prepare for an armed struggle. No arms were distributed, militaries for the "cavistas" or conscripts were made. Thus when the CEDA did enter the government the bluff of the PSOE was called. Largo Caballero called a general strike but he did not allow the government to make any preparations to prepare. However the Madrid working class took to the streets immediately on the same day, hoping that the PSOE's vague promises of arms would fulfil themselves. On October 1st the capital had been paralysed for 8 days but the PSOE had still done nothing. On October 13th the capital called a return to work claiming victory. (All the Madrid miners had been won over the arrest of Largo Caballero). And the Barcelona the CNT did little more despite the fact that the workers had spontaneously raised barricades in the city. In the end this was just political stalling and nothing to do with them. In this fashion the CNT also played its part in isolating the Asturian workers.

## THE ASTURIAN SOVIET

Only in Asturias where the control of the so-called political leaders of the working class was lost did the majority of the workers fight an aggression. At first only with sticks of dynamite the miners of the Northern region captured the barracks of the Civil Guard. An armed militia distributed their weapons to those who stayed. P.R.P. which means United Proletarian Workers of all political factions soon conquered all the mining villages, seizing 30,000 rifles in the process. In one place, La Felguera, the miners even built armoured cars and built growing machines to make for the shooting of rifles and machine-guns. Until the final victory of the international socialist revolution all struggles of the working class era in some sense or other defeated but the defeat of the Asturian miners

went beyond the physical slaughter of the workers.

Had the crushing of the Asturian October led to the political exposure of the anti-revolutionary character of the PSOE, CNT and even the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) then the Asturian miners could have lived to tell the tale. Unfortunately the events not only gave the PSOE leaders the undeserved crores of martyrs but even set the beginnings of the formation of a workers alliance aimed at setting up a soviet republic in 1934 now became part of history. The miners had tried to get an alliance with Britain and France, called upon workers to "defend democracy in the fascist name". Thus the Asturian miners, who had fought so hard against the capitalist Republic found themselves in 1936 taking up arms again - this time it defended "Defence of democracy" which replaced the struggle for socialism in this sense the miners' Class War from 1933-39 was a dress rehearsal for the 2nd World War since "defence of democracy" was what the anti-fascist alliance of Britain, Russia and the USA also used to win the workers to another imperialist butchery from 1939-45.

Today working class throughout the world is not under any direction of false leaders as it was in 1934 or 1936. But neither has it found its own expression of its genuine socialist and anarchist potential. And the chief lesson of Asturias is that without an independent proletarian organisation workers can be led into a struggle which, despite their heroic and courageous fight for socialism, the same can't escape from the alternatives of bourgeois politics. Such an organisation in 1934, would have based its perspective on the emerging political crisis which existed and put forward an independent proletarian response. This would have been to expose both the "anti-fascists" of the PSOE and the CNT as well as the "revolutionaries" and to have called for solidarity action of all Spanish workers with those of the Asturians. Otherwise it is likely that the political crises of the bourgeoisie would have continued to add Asturias, nor do they turn their backs on movements which begin with the working class and the dominated bourgeois forces. On the contrary they are the ones who are won over by these crises and movements to mobilise for a genuine class response and the transformation of the movement into an anti-capitalist one. Asturias "shows, on a small scale, that it is possible, given a communist presence in the working class.

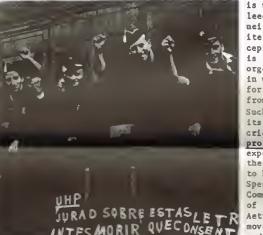
In the 1930s the workers in Spain were isolated from the rest of the class in Europe which had been physically crushed in its great struggles of the previous decade. Today, from Poland to Peru, the International Working Class has been born from the long nightmare of those days and it is beginning to create genuine communist organisations all over the world. The international working class is the secret of their increasing influence within the working class and its bourgeois ideology in its thousand forms is to be crushed. Only thus can the glorious future glimpse by the Asturian miners be turned into reality.

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If you sympathise with the CWO's politics, send us a remittance and a completed application form. The CWO leaders are soon assassinated but Largo Caballero's fame is still intact. He was given a 30 year prison sentence that he was never expected to serve.

Until the final victory of the international socialist revolution all struggles of the working class era in some sense or other defeated but the defeat of the Asturian miners

"Through its very movement, the action of the proletariat destroyed the State institutions and



U.H.P. (Unita Proletarian Brothers) - the proletarian slogan of 1934 had become by 1936 the slogan of the Asturian miners. The Asturian workers initiated their strike. In the face of this situation the delegates of the Provincial Committee of the Asturian workers signed a truce with the local army commandant Lopés Ochoa. Despite this agreement the miners broke the "law of order" in Asturias was amongst the most barbaric in a decade of barbarous warfare.

The agreement between Lopés Ochoa and the Provincial Committee by which he first promised to control the miners' strike with the Moorish regiments of the Foreign Legion, in the result of which was formally respected but the atrocities went on increasing day by day. The Civil Guard and the Foreign Legion were carrying out massacres on mass. But in the middle of these atrocities the Asturian miners were murdered and their bodies were thrown into the sea. The Asturian miners allowed their mercenary troops the right of sack in cities which resisted, so they reacted with immediate and terrible violence. The CNT leaders were soon assassinated but Largo Caballero's fame is still intact. He was given a 30 year prison sentence that he was never expected to serve.

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# CAPITALIST EL AND COMI

Communists aim to create a classless and stateless society in which the familiar tools of class violence such as the police, the judiciary and the army no longer exist. Nevertheless communists also recognise that such a society can only be built once the present society is destroyed. The change from the present capitalist society to a communist society will involve violent revolution in which many lives will be lost.

"A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part, by means of rifles, bayonets and clubs. But it is also a revolutionary means, if such there be at all, and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of laws which will not fail to inspire the reactionaries." (Engels, *On Authority* Selected Works p.659.)

People often ask, "Why is it that this change cannot be accomplished peacefully using the existing so-called democratic institutions of capitalist society such as parliament? There are two main reasons why communists cannot come through parliament - the first concerns the nature of democracy in capitalist society, and the second concerns the development of workers consciousness under conditions of capitalist domination.

**Democracy and Capitalism**  
Fascist day society consists of two main classes who face one another as deadly enemies, the capitalist class and the working class. The capitalist class live on the surplus which it extracts by means of the capitalist relations of production. These relations of production, such as wage labour, commodity production, division of labour, trade etc constitute the "economic structure" of society. It is this economic structure which is the political and legal superstructure of society that is erected. Democracy is simply one of a number of political superstructures which can be erected on top of the economic foundation, and it is this foundation which must be changed before any real change can occur in society. The economic structure of all countries in the world today is capitalist. Hence the political and legal superstructures vary according to differences in the details of these relations of production as well as historical and geographical factors. In particular, notably those of Western Europe and North America, have democratic systems which are a reflection of their economic strength, while others such as in Russia, Asia and Africa, have military dictatorships which are a reflection of their economic weakness, their domination by the technically advanced capitalist classes, the consequent virtual bankruptcy of the state, struggle. Russia and Eastern Europe have party dictatorships, which are again a reflection of their economic weakness and their historical

development. Communists argue that a new form of state power must be created in the revolutionary process to protect the proletariat power. This is in essence Marx's theory, since not only the bourgeoisie and their henchmen, but also the petty bourgeoisie are deprived of political rights. This new form of state is the political form, at least discovered, which can be worked out the economic emancipation of labour. We now know to be the Soviet state. In 1905 and 1917 in Russia, Democratic ideas are dangerous, since they spread the illusion that socialism can be achieved easily by ballot box manoeuvres, and weaken the resolve of the proletariat to deal with the opponents of socialism by depriving them of political rights.

Now the working class express its identity as a class via the ballot box, atomised as separate "citizens" amongst other citizens. The worker votes as a bourgeois individual subject to the influence of the fabricators of ideas in capitalist society (media, press, pulpit, etc). The proletarian class expresses its class identity through class action, such as strikes, mass meetings, picketing etc. And as the bourgeoisie well knows, and shows by its hysteria, these actions threaten the capitalist system. The capitalist system necessarily entails violence. "But," people ask, "why couldn't the army and police who consist of members of the working class simply return to the barracks and expel those causing bourgeois power to collapse?"

"It is necessary to shatter the bourgeoisie according to which every clash between opposing political parties, every struggle for power, must necessarily take place

within the democratic mechanism, that is through elections and parliamentary debates. We cannot succeed in destroying that life within the framework of the normal method of calling on workers to vote in elections side by side with members of the bourgeoisie and ending up in a situation where the defeated capitalist class is still represented in the same parliamentary ground as the bourgeoisie." (Theses on Parliamentarism of the Revolutionary Fraction of the Italian Socialist Party (1921) in Revolutionary Perspectives 3 p.7.)

**Capitalist Dictatorship**  
In the case of the **Argentine** military dictatorship, as also in South America it is perfectly obvious that we are dealing with the dictatorship of the capitalist class over the workers, but this is not true in the case of fascism. Fascism is based on capitalist exploitation as far as the working class is concerned. The fascists use the existing political superstructure in based on capitalist exploitation of the working class just as firmly as the military dictatorship. During as in capitalism, fascism depends on elaborate camouflage for the dictatorship of the capitalist class. The capitalist class pretend that the reason we have capitalism in Britain is because the working class has not decided on it, or at least have decided not to change it. This is a ridiculous lie, and in reality fascism is simply another weapon of the capitalist class which they use against the working class.

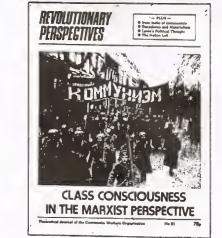
Parliamentarism developed as the political representation characterising the state founded by the bourgeoisie. But Marxists recognise that "democracy" and the granting of the franchise to all "citizens" does not prevent the capitalist class from controlling the state. For the defence of the capitalist class nor does it prevent the state from being a weapon of the bourgeoisie against the working class. To argue otherwise would be delusional. The formation of the political superstructure of society by the relations of production which characterise its foundation, i.e. to deny Marx."

Communist argue that a new form of state power must be created in the revolutionary process to protect the proletariat power. This is in essence Marx's theory, since not only the bourgeoisie and their henchmen, but also the petty bourgeoisie are deprived of political rights. This new form of state is the political form, at least discovered, which can be worked out the economic emancipation of labour. We now know to be the Soviet state. In 1905 and 1917 in Russia, Democratic ideas are dangerous, since they spread the illusion that socialism can be achieved easily by ballot box manoeuvres, and weaken the resolve of the proletariat to deal with the opponents of socialism by depriving them of political rights.

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"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period during which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

It is therefore necessary for the capitalist state machinery to be destroyed and for the working class to construct their own state machinery to facilitate the transition to classless society. "It is this working state which withers away as classes disappear and whose approach communism. However, the capitalist state does not necessarily entail violence. "But," people ask, "why couldn't the army and police who consist of members of the working class simply return to the barracks and expel those causing bourgeois power to collapse?"



1 (inc p & p) from group address

## MARXISM OR IDEALISM?

One of the tasks of a revolutionary organisation is to expose and undermine ruling class ideas which exist inside the working class under the name of socialism. Thus on 27th October the CWO condemned the well-intentioned "socialists" of the SPGB (Socialist Party of Great Britain) who imagine that achieving socialism is simply a matter of persuading a majority of workers of the virtues of a classless, moneyless society based on co-operation.

For our part our speakers pointed to the non-Marxist and idealist basis of the SPGB's politics which prevent them from understanding anything about the process of revolution and the material basis for the growth of socialist consciousness in the working class. The CWO sees the problem in idealist terms, i.e. as a question of spreading knowledge, they can only ignore the objective circumstances which force the working class as a class to confront capitalism and to ask themselves: "The crisis? - What crisis?" "The possibility of collapse?" For the SPGB stalwarts nothing could be more amusing.

The CWO pointed to the evidence of history to condemn the SPGB's evolutionism. In 1926 the SPGB did not win through a democratically elected majority in Parliament with the capitalist class meekly handing over power to their class enemy who this "socialist" parliament withdraws grants and aid. For the SPGB the lesson of the First World War has gone unlearned, while the fact that the ruling class has lived for over a century of universal suffrage and the ballot box without the smallest sign of the working class winning control of parliament (never mind in the name of socialism)

When tasked by us as to how the working class will achieve socialism in their scheme of things the SPGB were dishonest. Instead of defending their view of socialism via the ballot box, they announced that Parliament was only one of many possible ways to socialism or another! Given their oft published view that policemen are part of the working class, just like any other wage earner (it doesn't matter what job they do) and that the police's political actions are irrelevant to the struggle for socialism (due to the fact that workers aren't knowledgeable), we asked if the miners' strike had any significance for them and if so, quite simply, which side are they on when it comes down to workers battling against the ruling oligarchy of society. One speaker announced that "personally he was with the miners while the other seemed to be trying to solve the question of class solidarity with family ties by announcing that many miners had cousins who were policemen!

Sadly this was the level the SPGB chose to defend their views. Our Marxist view of class consciousness can be summed up in "the CWO thinks the workers are thick". Smart, we said, from a party which sees its task as spreading knowledge to ignorant workers and complaining for example the First War is a "most shameful example of ignorant workers being easily duped by the empty jingoism of desperately politicians" (Socialist Standard May 1982).

The issue is not that the workers don't know what socialism is about (many do) but that they are educated under capitalism they don't see how this can be avoided. Today's collective struggles are a preparation for tomorrow's revolution which will give the working class the confidence and the means to begin the task of building a new society.

For us the value of this debate was that it starkly exposed the SPGB as an enemy of the "real movement" of the working class.

ECTIONS  
MUNISM

second main reason why the democratic institutions of capitalism couldn't be used for taking power. Communists believe that politically the majority of the working class are dominated by capitalist ideas and will remain so while capitalism continues to function.

**Formation of Ideas**  
Marxists are materialist and recognises that the ideas people have are in the last analysis a reflection of the material world which they perceive through practice. In a similar way the social ideas or social consciousness of the working class reflect the economic structure workers perceive in material life. Things which appear normal to most people today such as working for wages and extracting the surplus value of labour and housing would have appeared quite extraordinary to people in feudal times or in the earlier period when production was based on slavery. As Marx wrote,

"...it is in the consciousness of men that determines their existence but their social existence which determines their consciousness."

Ideas have an historical dimension. Conceptions are conditioned by what has occurred in the past as well as by the social conditions we experience at present. The material forces in society are therefore based on the productive relationships which constitute the economic structure of society, and the interpretation of these relationships is the interpretation of society. This interpretation is inevitably that of the ruling class. This means, as Marx clearly stated in "The German Ideology" that within class society,

"The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is in the position to dominate the material forces of society at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control of the masses, over the mass of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of material production are grasped by it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships as ideas..."

In general the ideas of the ruling class are amongst the working class. Such a conclusion is an inescapable result of a materialist understanding of society. The majority of the working class accept the capitalist ideas of the capitalist ideas any more than a man can hang over his shadow. For Marx only the school of revolution could break the hold of capitalist ideas over the majority of the working class.

"Both for the production on a mass scale of this commodity communism and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a great social movement, a revolution. This revolution, however, must not be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class which can only in a revolution succeed in riding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew." (German Ideology)

Therefore, even if parliament were an institution able to change society (which it isn't), it would not be possible for the majority of the working class to achieve communist con-

sciousness and vote for the establishment of communism. Parliament cannot at best measure the extent of the intellectual domination of the capitalist class over the workers. The parliamentary road to socialism is therefore a utopian dream.

To argue, as certain idealists do, that if one can convert the majority to socialism so a majority is to retreat from the historical materialism of Marx, which understands society in terms of the relations between the forces of production, to the bourgeois materialism of the capitalist class. Such materialism starts, not from the aims of classes, but from the single individual and generalised "man" as the point to society at large. Society, however, does not consist of single "free" individuals and so all the conclusions based on this method of argument are false.

**Consciousness**

Although in general the working class will be dominated by the ideas of the capitalist class this domination can never be total. Capitalist society is founded on class antagonisms. These antagonisms are material conflicts which the working class experiences in its daily life and which directly contradict the ideas of the capitalist class. The working class is the only communist class or communist consciousness. Communists understand and interpret the events of the class struggle in the light of the class' historical evolution. The working class attempts to liberate itself from capitalist oppression and its future role in the creation of communist society. The working class struggle is actively restrictive in the light of the historical materialist understanding of society. The communist consciousness is based on an totally contradiction of events in society. However, while capitalist conditions to function this struggle can only be conducted by a minority of the working class. This conclusion does not, however, mean (as the parliamentary socialists maintain) that communists are impossible.

**Communist Propaganda**  
To educate communism it is necessary for the minority who understand the true nature of present society and the need for communism to give a lead in the battles of the working class. Although the working class has suffered a period of actual collapse of the capitalist structures, by giving a political and practical lead in the material battles of the working class communists can help the working class under the communist banner. The politicisation of these masses will proceed in step with their practical struggle and will become easier as the working class' ideas of communism have become exposed in practice. It is not necessary for a majority of workers to understand the communist programme before the class battles of communism are fought. These battles with themselves provide the soil for the growth of communist consciousness as a massive struggle of the communist idea.

Stamping out of the capitalist idea. It will however be impossible to construct communist society without the active participation of the majority of the working class. This does not mean that small groups and individuals in every country but an overall majority in the capitalist heartlands is required. This majority must be built up during the process of revolution itself. This process will, of course, expose today's parliamentary democracy as simply camouflage for capitalist dictatorship which will be swept into the dustbin of history.

## Review: Racism and the Class Struggle

*Hand on the Sun* by Tariq Mahmood, published in paperback by Penguin Books at £1.75.

In 1976 in 18 year old Asian youth, Gurdip Singh Cheggar, was attacked and murdered by a gang of white racists in Southall. Instead of settling for token demonstrations organised by the self-appointed representatives of the Asian "community", young Asians in the Southall book took their own course of action and organised for their own self-defence. After all, how can an organisation which believes that the trade unions are the only organisations that can defend the working class expect its militancy for leading a struggle outside of the union framework? This is true, but it ignores a deeper problem which is common to the question of the formation of a working-class party with its real roots in the working class. - The problem of how to develop from a propagandist organisation into one that can relate its political line to the practical reality and concrete policies to lead workers' struggles as they occur in the real world.

If revolutionaries cannot provide a political answer to the questions "What do we do?" and "How do we fight?" the communist programme will remain hidden from the bulk of the working class.

It is unserious for revolutionaries to argue that racism is a secondary issue, in effect rather than the cause of black workers' oppression. This kind of theoretical chauvinism only leads to inaction in practice. Of course capitalism is the real enemy of both black and white workers. Of course racism cannot be fought without capitalist oppression. But this only means that capitalist oppression is a permanent aspect of capitalism. For the black worker it is part and parcel of capitalist exploitation. In the real world it is impossible to separate capitalist oppression and harassment from the rest of capital's attacks. Feded with physical attack on their lives and their homes, black workers have no alternative but to turn to their own defence. Those Asian workers who have realised that the traditional community leaders and the AYM organisation are not the basis for a real defence of workers' rights to organise independently of them can only be welcomed by revolutionaries. This does not mean that we support separatist black organisations or that we support "black capitalist" owners' organisations, it is simply welcoming the beginning of an organised response to the state and the bosses' violence.

However, for any organisation which springs from the class in response to an immediate, specific demand like "Don't let us go far here!" and "How to maintain organisational autonomy?" is posed. The answer to both questions is political and because Mahmood is principally concerned *Hand on the Sun* provides no answer to either. The book describes how the AYM was formed by ex-members of left-wing capitalist organisations who had already provided giving the organisation political aims and the obvious political implications of their activity. With the majority of its members content to regard the AYM as a sort of social club it fails to surmount the difficulties of another cog in the state's community relations machine. The UBLV which split first and then came to unite again, however, was a more useful ally to the ruling class as a means to "divide and rule" and he is looking for a solution. At least he does describe how the Asian youth are to organise and defend themselves against attack and how leading a fight against redundancies at work meant organising the workers without the "help" of the local trade unions. However, it is the lack of any character's disillusion with left-wing capitalist organisations. At the beginning of the book he is a member of the newly-formed AYM, but when his parents pressure him and he has left to form the AYM along with friends who have broken with other leftist organisations such as Militants. However, before he revolutionises start cheating, it must be noted that the young militiaman's disillusion does not involve a criticism of these groups' politics. It is the absence of any critical tactic of the revolution when the youth's political leader is faced with a real situation of confrontation which leads to the disillusion. Hussain, the Militant organiser who works in a mill, finds the young swept up under his feet when he sees how the union organiser is in league with the bosses. It is an older, more experienced shop floor militiaman who realises the next fight must be without the union.

But *Hand on the Sun* also shows us the material basis for a concerted response by black and white workers to the capitalists and their state. Unshamed Asian youth are in exactly the same position as their West Indian or

white counterparts. The schooling system is no more meaningful for white working class kids than it is for black kids. Black and white workers in joint and exclusively increasing numbers are the source of redundancies. Although the ruling class uses racism to divide black and white workers whenever it can, capitalism is world-wide now. No racialised militiamen and workers can escape its effects. Whether it is striking miners fighting against the state and strike breakers, or black workers organising a picket their communities from racist thugs and police berescism, it is up to revolutionaries to give them support.

However, the role of the revolutionary organisation cannot be limited to that of a support group for the militiamen. The race issue is itself the basis for recruiting militant black workers. Whenever and wherever it intervenes in the daily struggles of working class militiamen it is developing a revolutionary political consciousness amongst the militants involved. We have to point to the wider implications of such struggle and use the immediate experience of the working class as a starting point for a deeper and wider political education. Militants looking for a revolutionary answer to their problems must understand that oppression can only find it from their immediate situation alone. This applies equally to black and white workers. There are a whole series of organisations that have sprung from the histories of generations of international class struggle, of revolutions and their eventual defeat. The basic issues facing revolutionaries are the same as those of the capitalist crisis, imperialism and the national question, the role of the trade unions in the present epoch, the historical rôle of the working class and the internationalisation of production, the need for internationalisation for an international proletariat party etc - all these must be grasped by anyone who wants to be a revolutionary today. It is the task of the existing organisations to link these issues to workers whose struggles are the basis for developing revolutionary class consciousness. As Lenin said, "The working class does not understand very well the facts of their daily situation - they don't need to learn how much they are exploited from revolutionaries. They are not interested in political theory, in political lessons and a practical political lead. The same thing also holds today for black workers who don't need 'revolutionaries' to come end tell them what they are oppressed by but whose political consciousness has not yet gone beyond left-wing capitalist ideology. We make no bones about the fact that we are trying to recruit black workers to our politics. This isn't meant to pull the ranks of our organisation as an end in itself but an essential part of developing a revolutionary political culture with the working class. Only by coming over all militant workers - black and white - can revolutionaries begin to lead the class struggle. This is the main crux of the rôle of the international proletarian party will be imperious. At the same time, without an understanding of the communist programme, militant workers will be unable to build an independent organisation against capitalism. The question of "building the party" and fighting racism of unemployment are not separate issues, as Hussain claims. The Sun has been born from his negative experience in the SWP. They are part of the same process of developing class consciousness and establishing a concrete political practice on the part of the revolutionaries organisation.

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# WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

In our last edition we published an example of the kind of work undertaken by the Bureau for the Revolutionary Party, which coordinates the international work of the organisations of the P.C.Int (Battaglia Comunista) and comrades in France who share the positions of our two organisations. In addition to the struggle against the Iran/Iraq war and the tasks of communists, aimed at the diaspora from this area, and to promote the adoption of revolutionary positions on the world stage.

The Bureau is not a regroupment; it is a point of reference and orientation for the tasks, theoretical and practical, of the revolutionaries of the working class and the proletariat. Out of the work of the Bureau will come political confrontations and, we hope, collaborations, which will prepare the ground for a full regroupment. The Bureau has established political criteria for its work which consist of the points adopted by the first three international communist conferences. These criteria are sufficient to establish its framework both for the capitalist left, and the neo-syndicalist and councilist spectrum.

These points are:

1. Rejection of the revolution of October 1917 in Russia as proletarian

2. Recognition of the break made with social democracy in the first two Congresses of the P.C. Int.

3. Complete rejection of state capitalism and self management

4. Rejection of all present communist and socialist parties as bourgeois

5. An orientation towards an organisation of revolutionaries which base itself on the documents and the orientation of the Bureau, recognising the science of the working class.

6. Rejection of all possibility of subordinating the proletariat to the national bourgeoisie.

7. Recognition of the organisational role of the working class in the struggle of the working class, as well as in the revolution itself.

A brief platform and statutes of the Bureau have been printed in its organ *Communist Review*, 1, copies of which are available from the CMO.

We hoped, in taking this initiative, that the Bureau would be the forum for the initiation of contacts on a wider international level. In addition, additional material has been published a communication received from a group of ex Red Brigades members who are struggling towards communist politics. The Bureau has also received material from a group in India, whose outline statement we printed in the last *W*. These materials allow us to occupy a truly place of militant communion within the framework outlined above, and work for the formation of a communist fraction there.

The Bureau has written to the Indian comrades (who show a willingness to engage in political debate) explaining the function of the Bureau:

"Not least, the 4th International Conference re-arranged the need for an organisational framework, a forum for international debate and discussion with an agreed framework as part of the process towards the formation of the future international party. This is what the P.C. Int. and CMO along with comrades in France, formed the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party (IBRP) in December last year. The IBRP is a means for the other international organisations to conduct joint international work and its publication, *Communist Review*, we hope will prove to be a vehicle for international debate and for carrying the tasks of the party." (IBRP Letter 14.9.86)

In the next edition of *W* we will carry a review and critique of the positions of the Revolutionary Proletariat group (now re-named Proletarian Emancipation).

The Bureau has also received a communication from Mexico, from the Communist Collective of Alpiruba. This group, whose positions we are in the process of studying, expresses itself as follows: "We are in favour of the abolition of wage labour, seen as the solution of the capitalist crisis, and opposes popular fronts and "national revolution". In our preliminary reply and exchange of materials we welcomed their evolution and willingness to debate and

argued: "Revolutionary organisations are not born in a day, with all their theories and policies in order. International discussion serves first and foremost to encourage the maturation, the growth and selection of revolutionary forces." (Int Letter 8.6.86)

From Argentina the Bureau has received a communication from a group called *Emancipation* *Overo*, which most interestingly states,

"During the Falklands War, we were the only political group in Argentina which condemned the imperialist interventionism, calling for solidarity with the British working class... 'War on War' was our slogan."

The materials received from this group show their opposition to fractions of all hues, to national liberation and for the proletarian dictatorship, as well as an accommodation towards the working class. Again, we are studying their material and will bring fuller details in the next issue.

While it would be euphoric to overestimate the significance of these developments, it is nevertheless the case that the shift in the type of groups which advocate communist positions signifies the end of the reflux in the communist camp which took place in the mid 1970s, and ended the work of the International Bureau. It is also the case that accelerating crisis, and equally importantly, the rebirth of class struggle on a wide scale, is providing the basis for a renewed development of the working-class vanguard.

It also means that the Bureau can now finally orient itself, after suitable preparation by worker and through its press, for the preparation of a further international conference. To this we hope that not only will these new groups adhere, but also certain older groups, which took part in earlier conferences, once more have the courage to return and take up their mistakes, and they place (or replace) themselves within the criteria adopted by earlier conferences.



## S.A. MINERS (Cont from page 8)

Imperialists safe for capitalism. Communists in the struggle for socialism call for election of strike committees and mass picketing (only a minority of workers struck), as well as trying to lead the fight into one over housing, mobility etc.

These events are symptomatic of a more general crisis in the organisation of capitalist exploitation in S.A. and the battles being fought amongst the S.A. ruling class.

### Apartheid Myths

The imperialists have opposed apartheid since the imperialist govt introduced it in the 1950s, for the simple reason that it restricted their supply of labour and their use of this labour for skilled jobs. It never represented a threat to the profits of the imperialist capitalists, though in the boom period following the war it was an evil they could live with. However, in the 40 years since the war, the weight of African population has increased enormously. In 1955 there were 500 000 black workers, today there are approximately 63 million, and the archaic organisation of this black proletariat is threatening capital accumulation itself.

Today the programme of the S.A. industrial capitalists is to create a black middle class and black proletariat with the normal union apparatus, such as exists in Europe, and they wish to bring in black workers to do jobs reserved for white workers at lower rates of pay. The system of migrant labour must go. In addition they want to stabilise the townships and are prepared to pay to do this. They will also allow themselves their own houses, to create a black middle class and help the African capitalists by means of cheap loans etc. In other words they wish to form a class able to act as a bridge between the African masses and scrap the official racial alliances which are no longer of any use. An example of their attempts to do this is their creation of the "white community" in Soweto after the Soweto riots of 1976. It was set up, as its president declared to "foster the emergence of a black middle class and greater stability". In this way, in the short term, in its creation it has provided loans for such things as the electrification of Soweto and the con-

struction of schools and hospitals in the townships. It has also attempted, unsuccessfully to persuade the govt to allow Africans to buy land in the townships. This is a call for election of strike committees and mass picketing (only a minority of workers struck), as well as trying to lead the fight into one over housing, mobility etc.

These events are symptomatic of a more general crisis in the organisation of capitalist exploitation in S.A. and the battles being fought amongst the S.A. ruling class.

The overall interests of the western bloc require such a change. South Africa is vital to the imperialists as a source of minerals (aside one of the world's main shipping lanes and with a virtual monopoly of certain strategic minerals). The stability of S.A. is important to the imperialists, its expansion and its growth is thus needed. But to achieve it will be extremely difficult, without bold social conditions and the opening of the possibility of imperialist/Pan-African rule. The situation in South Africa is most likely to "spark" until a world war, or proletarian revolution.

## POSKANTOOR

Goldminers - already having to strike for their interests

The nationalist government is utterly unable to carry through such a programme, though it realises, since it controls 55% of the economy, that it is in its interest to do so. They have seen it allying itself with the industrial capitalists more openly through such measures as its support for the creation of black trade unions, and its attacks and open violations of its labour laws and siding with the mine bosses against the white miners and they must prevent the workers' movement.

Its attempts to defuse the situation have finally crystallised in the ridiculous constitutional changes which came into effect in September, and fool no one.

## THE FUTURE

The S.African working class who number 3 million are the biggest industrial proletariat in Africa and are destined in the future to struggle for communism. The present divisions in the working class are rooted in the way capitalism is developed in the country and are currently being exploited by the bosses to prevent workers understanding their position in class terms. Objectively white workers have far more in common with their black class brothers than white capitalists do.

Elsewhere the racial divisions in S.A. are class divisions not racial ones. The racial divisions which exist for historical and social reasons are used by the imperialist govt and the bosses to keep them apart. It is for this that the Afrikaner nationalists of the present govt and the African nationalists are preparing, through a civil war, to involve themselves bloodied amongst workers and would not benefit them. Even if the African nationalists came to power and intended to redistribute the wealth of the state as they promise, benefits for black workers would be minimal. Workers in Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique have already discovered this.

The class struggle in S.Africa needs to be given political direction in combating the Afrikaner and African nationalists and uniting black, brown and white workers in a single struggle for communism. For this it is necessary for communists in S.A. to form a political alliance to defend the workers in the future struggles of the workers, and to link up with communists in Europe.



# WORKERS VOICE

## SOUTH AFRICA IN TURMOIL

# THE OTHER MINERS STRIKE

### Introduction

Throughout the world the capitalist economic crisis is wreaking havoc on the myths of the post-war period of recovery. The dream of the "consumer society" has already bitten the dust in the advanced capitalist metropoles. Both the economy and development has also crumbled, and nowhere more so than in the partly industrialised peripheral areas of capitalism - in Brazil, in Iran and in South Africa. In these countries the working class faces particular problems; so-called anti-imperialism", as well as ethnic and racial division, and the minority nature of the proletariat. Communists have analysed these problems and argue that their solution is automatically found on the great day that the proletariat of the capitalist heartlands moves. The better the conditions in the advanced capitalist countries, the more difficult it is to conceive that the working class in the periphery can do much in such areas.

The case of South Africa is particularly compelling. Lately huge social upheavals, with large proletarian advances, have occurred against a backdrop of economic crisis. The following article elaborates the revolutionary position on these events.

The last two months have seen a fresh explosion of violence in South Africa. This has occurred on three separate fronts. Firstly the election of coloured (mixed race) and Indian deputies for the new parliamentary chambers, secondly repression in the mines and transport costs in the African townships, and thirdly strikes by black mineworkers. The elections have led to over a thousand arrests and detentions.

The rise in the strike which continues as we go to press, has so far led to the deaths of hundreds and hundreds of injured, and the strike in the gold mines led to the deaths of 9 striking miners and the wounding of many others. There are now an estimated 2 million unemployed and the steady fall in the price of gold is causing balance of payments problems. In addition, the country is mired with vast military expenditure financing its war in Namibia which costs £600 million annually, and supporting guerrilla movements in Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and elsewhere.

All these events have a common cause whose root springs from the capitalist economic crisis and the pressures which capitalist development places on itself exerting on the outmoded organisation of exploitation which exists in the country.

#### THE ELECTIONS

The government is imposing a new constitution on the country. Instead of the previous white only parliament, a new 3 chamber parliament will be set up with 100 seats for whites (178 seats), one for coloureds (85 seats) and one for Indians (45 seats). The coloured and Indian minorities have no real power, and the black majority, which is 70 million and constitutes 75% of the population, is totally excluded from the new set up. The new constitution is in reality a crude attempt by the Govt to recruit the coloured and Indian populations as allies against the black majority, and the majority of the coloured and Indian people realise this. During the elections a successful multi-racial campaign was conducted by the ANC, despite beatings and imprisonment of its leaders led to abysmally low polls - 18% and 16% of those eligible voted in the coloured and Indian election respectively.

What was missing in this campaign was a communist presence. The task of revolutionaries would have been to have supported the campaign for the right to vote, and then combined this with an attack on parliamentary cretinism in general (see the article in this paper on the miners strike) and a call at the ballot box for the black and coloured workers. Indian and coloured bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie in their campaign for a "more democratic" system of exploitation.

THE TOWNSHIPS

The situation in the townships has again become critical for the Govt. These townships are supposed, in apartheid theory, to provide temporary accommodation for black migrant workers who are employed in the white collar labour power in the industrial centres. In reality these are enormous cities with permanent populations. Soweto alone has a population of over 1.5 million. These cities cannot be run without the co-operation of the people who live in them. Over the last 10 years the Govt has been attempting to set up armed bodies to help run these townships, but with little success. Often they have even failed to find candidates to stand for election and the poll has been under 1%. The blacks who enter the management structure of the townships are seen as traitors.

The costs of running these cities, however, continue to add to the burden of the townships. The rents which the workers living there have to foot the bill. At the same time, in common with workers worldwide, their wages are being held down. The latest round of rent, tax and wage increases has led to a massive outburst of resistance in the townships of the Witwatersrand industrial area. The immediate targets of resistance were members of the town councils and black councillors many of whom were killed by demonstrators. The government minister in charge of the townships, attempting to clean up his public image, tried to visit the townships but was beaten up. The Minister was forced to retreat by helicopter. For the first time ever the police have had to call in the army to maintain order in the townships. But the main reason of the anger of the government was seen in the separation of its aims from those of the miners. The indigenous black proletariat of South Africa has largely abandoned the trade unions and engaged in dangerous work in the factories and service industries which are better paid. Mines, after all, are mines, Laerskloof etc., form a sub-proletariat. Against the lack of a communist strategy to link the separate struggles, was cruelly exposed.

THE MINERS STRIKE

Black miners are mostly migrant workers recruited from so called "homelands" and the neighbouring states. There are approximately 400 000 migrant workers in the gold mines alone. They are recruited for fixed contracts usually annual, then sent home. They work 6 and often 7 days a week and live in appalling conditions in the mine compounds. Rates of pay are £100 per month or £50 per week. Miners were demanding a 20% rise. Their union, the newly formed NUM, had taken the dispute to the streets. The elected officials and machinery of industrial conciliation boards and the strike was official. After only one day the bosses increased their offer to 10% and the union called off the strike. A miners' meeting overjoyed at the role of the union and Anglo-American, which led the way in fostering the black "National Union". The miners and other mining houses to follow their lead and recognise the union. Many workers, however, were not satisfied at this settlement and in addition demands were made to end the practice of workers often finding from visitors to their families replaced by fresh recruits. The response to the refusal of thousands of miners to return to work the houses called in the police who shot 5 miners dead and wounded 450 most of whom had to be admitted to hospital. In explaining this the Minister of Internal Affairs said as Thatcher & Co use right. The police were, "protecting miners rights. The police were, "protecting miners rights."

The role of the National Union of Miners in this is to be a key factor. Concerned with gaining recognition and recruitment rights, it acted as a force controlling the explosion of class hatred, a role which the miners themselves have adopted more widely in the future. This clearly re-enforces our position that, irrespective of whether they today act as partners in the struggle, or controlling the class struggle and deflecting it

Continued on page 7

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# SHIPYARD & AIRCRAFT NATIONALISATION

"But the transformation, either into joint stock companies, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces....The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the ideal personification of total national capital...The workers remain wage labourers, proletarians." (Engels)

The Labour Government recently announced that it intended to nationalise the shipbuilding and aircraft industries, despite theatrical howls of protest from the 'opposition' in Parliament. But these measures are not the start of 'socialist policies', but are rather a vital part of the states strategy for the survival of capitalism.

Why then is nationalisation so important to the ruling class? If shipbuilding and aircraft production (and a whole host of other industries), which are already only surviving on Government 'aid', are left to their own devices, they will collapse. But a contraction of these industries left to 'market forces' and private enterprise would not produce the best results for capitalism as a whole. What is needed is an orderly contraction of yards and factories in order to leave the most necessary and vital ones intact (eg those concerned with defence and those which will be most profitable in the longterm).

## ONLY THE STATE CAN CARRY OUT THIS RATIONALISATION.

All the ruling class, except the more backward members of the Tory Party, are agreed that certain 'lame ducks' must not be allowed to go to the wall. And this process of capitalist rationalisation via the state has already occurred internationally in many industries. Since coal, steel and other heavy industries are the backbone of any modern capitalist state this is no soft option for the ruling class. No country can go back to the days of allowing private industry to have free rein. The capital costs are too high for private capitalists. (It is highly unlikely that any North Sea oil would have come ashore if the Government had not helped to raise the capital).

If nationalisation is a policy of capitalism in crisis, what does it all mean for the workers? It does NOT mean that the government keeps firms going just to keep workers in work - a million and a half out of work can testify to that. For workers it means that instead of a whole industry collapsing the Government will become their boss. What money is available

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for investment will go to a few concentrated or vital plants or yards. In steel, for example, no less than 90,000 workers have gone 'down the road' since 1964. On the railways the story is the same - the workforce halved in the same period. Nationalisation, instead of being a device to save jobs, means for the workers heavy redundancies. The take-over of the shipyards and aircraft industry is only a prelude to their rationalisation and to massive redundancies, with increased productivity for the workers who remain.

Workers will find the unions and shop stewards are the ones shouting loudest for nationalisation (eg trying to whip up support for a strike in favour of the Varley Bill). But we are a far cry from the days of 1945 when millions of workers were swept along by the idea that nationalisation was the beginning of socialism. Today, workers are embittered and cynical about nationalisation. In Felixtowe the officials and stewards of the T.G.W.U. are shouting for the government to take-over the docks. In those industries already nationalised the unions and stewards are the first to collaborate with the management so that 'our' factory, 'our' steel mill can be run more efficiently.

'Participation' is the name of the game and its all to prevent the workers from rocking the 'nationalised' boat. For in reality, despite a change of name, despite workers in the boardroom, despite state control, it is capitalism and not the workers that gains by nationalisation. Are British Leyland workers any better off since the Government took over? Does the fact that many shipyards are already 50% Government owned prevent them from sacking workers? With the state, the CBI and the unions all in such cosy agreement about the need for higher productivity and no strikes; with Healy saying there will be no "significant increase in wages until 1980"(and just what is on the cards for then?) , its obvious that plans to nationalise more industries are part of the whole attack on the working class, part of an attempt to make us get them out of their crisis by accepting redundancies, speed-up, cuts in manning levels and "sacrifices" in the "national interest".

The working class must see through nationalisation and what it means. We have no interest in the creation of a society where the state owns the means of production, as in Russia, and where the workers remain wage-slaves (neither, of course, do we have any interest in the maintenance of private capitalism).

Our interests do not lie in working harder to make 'British industry' more profitable, any more than Italian or French workers should do the same for 'their' economies. Our interests lie in the creation of a world community of producers.

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# A Year of Self-management

Nationalisation (or state capitalism) is not the only pseudo-socialism that is offered to the working class. As a more 'human' variety, self-management (or ideas of 'workers capitalism'), has been pushed to the fore in the present economic crisis by the more 'enlightened' section of the ruling class. In Portugal recently the call for 'self-management' played a role in helping to prevent the class from attacking the State, instead spending its efforts on futile attempts to take over and manage individual factories. But these self-managed co-ops are no more socialism than is state ownership and neither are they a step towards it, rather they are a fast gallop away from it.

On a less dramatic level the nature of self-management can be illustrated by the study of the outstanding British examples of 'workers capitalism', which have just completed their first year in operation: Kirby Engineering in Liverpool which arose out of the collapse of the old Fischer-Bendix factory, and the Meriden Co-op in Coventry, resulting from the fall of N.V.T. motorcycle factory. Both these co-ops arose after the workers in the original factories had staged militant but unsuccessful struggles against the closure of the plants. At this point many

of the original work-force drifted away, but those who were left took up the cry launched by the shop stewards committees for the formation of workers co-ops. With the help of government grants (saving on the payment of unemployment benefits) and the investment of workers' redundancy money, the factory was purchased at knock-down prices and production restarted. After the publication of the first year's production figures, lets have a look at the results.

Co-ops can in no way escape the logic of the capitalist market. In order to compete in the capitalist jungle where the old private capitalists themselves had failed, the workers remaining in the factories had to abandon all the practices and conditions of work that the capitalists themselves could never abolish. Both factories have introduced almost total flexibility of labour in order that they can work with a much reduced labour force. But even this is not enough: both are operating with wage-rates substantially lower than those currently prevailing in the industry (at Meriden the wages are £5-£10 per week lower than in other engineering factories in the area). In other words the exploitation has been increased enormously and real wages have fallen. But inspite of this both co-ops are in real trouble and have ended the year with huge losses: Kirby has lost £1 million in its first year of production and Meriden has also made sub-

stantial losses. The option facing both of them is that experienced by the Scottish Daily News set up in Glasgow after the collapse of the Scottish Daily Express in 1974. There the workers accepted a reduction in manning from 1,500 to 500, flexibility, giving up wage increases etc, in order to start 'their own' paper, and even then it collapsed after a year and a half. Now the demoralised few dozen remaining are offering themselves to the capitalist whiz-kid Maxwell (Labour M.P.) with an even lower manning level and are abandoning this years £6 wage increase in order that he can exploit them more profitably. For Meriden and Kirby to continue in existence it will mean even lower wages and harder work. In fact both factories are already doing sub-contract work which is generally cheap labour - Meriden is now doing work formerly done in Taiwan.

Those who argue that the workers have no option but to set up co-operatives or self-managed factories and then proceed to 'help' them by uncritically publishing their struggles, advertising their products, are in reality the most shortsighted. Most of these co-ops are doomed to collapse and the few that remain will only do so by the most massive exploitation of the labour force. This will leave the workers involved just as demoralised as those who originally signed on the dole. Within the capitalist system there is no solution, the only 'practical' one is to prepare for its destruction. The way forward has been shown by the message of the Bultaco workers printed on page 14 of this issue.

What we as revolutionaries have to offer workers faced with redundancy is not free advertising space for co-ops or cash for their fighting fund, but an analysis of the causes of their unemployment. While the crisis is at an immature stage as at present, it will not force the class into a generalised attack on capitalism, and isolated sectors thrown on the dole will often fall into the self-managed trap. Our task is not to encourage the illusions that this is any solution, but rather to show that this is a diversion for the class. Indeed, in any future upsurge on a widespread basis, ideas such as self-management, workers' control etc. will be as big an obstacle to the class' self emancipation as was the state capitalist programme of nationalisation in the past. Our interest as workers does not lie in taking over the running of capitalism and competing in the world market better than our bosses, but in the destruction of the world market and the creation of a society where the whole of production and exchange is collectively owned. Competition and profit will be replaced by planned production for humanity's material and cultural needs.

Workers forced into these co-ops should have no illusions; most will be only short term alternatives to the dole. In those which "survive" workers must fight against further increases in exploitation. (in Kirkby strikes have already occurred). Class struggle, not self-management is the way ahead

# SOUTH AFRICA

Since June events have taken a dramatic turn in South Africa: strikes by school students in the black ghetto areas surrounding Johannesburg; boycotts of factories by black workers; mounting tension and bitterness towards the state leading to clashes with the police and armed forces resulting in the massacre of about two hundred young blacks. These events have been claimed as the start of a revolutionary struggle by the blacks in South Africa against the white oppressors, a movement aided spiritually by the victory of the M.P.L.A. in Angola. In this article we shall look at the events in South Africa in an attempt to see in which direction the true interest of the South African working class lies.

The strike by the school students in Soweto and the surrounding townships began as a protest against being taught in Afrikaans, a language which to them symbolised the authority of the repressive state and apartheid. For historical reasons, which will be dealt with later in the article, the pro-apartheid section of the ruling class in South Africa are Afrikaan speaking of Dutch origin while the English speaking minority, representing as they do the industrial interests, tend to form a liberal opposition to apartheid. But this grievance over language was only a trigger...The bitterness among the young blacks which lead to the confrontation with the state was due more to the poverty in the black townships made worse recently by the economic crisis, and the system of apartheid which excludes the blacks from participating in South Africa's 'prosperity' which their labour created. But the movement, inspite of all its intensity, never really challenged the authority of the state, and is doomed to peter out. The black workers failed to respond to the events as a class and mass strikes failed to arise. Instead the workers reacted in an atomised fashion either by staying at home or participating in the rioting. The initial demand of the students was conceded, but the material conditions of the black working class remains unchanged.

## THE WORKING CLASS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

More fruitful from a revolutionary point of view were the strikes by black workers from 1972-74. During that period strikes were frequent and sometimes bitter, indicating that the workers in South Africa are reacting to the crisis in the same way as workers all over the world: in 1972 a strike by the dockers and migrant workers in Namibia; in 1973 up to 100,000 workers on strike in one month in Natal where strike committees were formed; in 1974, 374 recorded stoppages involving 58,000 workers. But inspite of their militancy even these strikes had not the potential to develop into a revolutionary struggle.

This can only be achieved when the working class is moving towards unity, a task which, for historical reasons, will be a difficult one for the South African workers. At the moment the working class is divided by racial lines, a division which has been made worse by the government's policy of apartheid which was introduced in 1948. Apartheid ensures that all the skilled and supervisory jobs are done by whites. The blacks, excluded by law from serving an apprenticeship for a trade, are forced into the unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Communists must remember, however, that there is a white working class in South Africa, though a prosperous and privileged one. Many white workers are recent immigrants from areas with a tradition of class struggle and it is also a mistake to see the white workers as foremen only. Factory workers in South Africa are often white. It is uncertain what role the white working class will play in any forthcoming revolutionary struggle. It is possible that they are too deeply imbued with racist ideology to unite with their black comrades in the struggle against capitalism. (Black workers also hold racist ideas, their hatred being directed towards the whites and Asians). With the deepening of the crisis the white workers will gradually lose their privileges and, as their material situation worsens, they may well come to the understanding that they are exploited as is the rest of the working class, black and white, the world over. Indeed, the white working class in South Africa has a history of militancy. Prior to the First World War there were militant white miners' strikes and in 1922, as part of a general world wide class movement, there were mass strikes in response to proposals to lower wages. At first this movement appeared promising, involving members of the newly formed Communist Party of South Africa and expelled union members. Neither did it lack militancy. The strikers formed armed pickets and 'Councils of Action' and had to be crushed by force after eight weeks on strike. However, towards the end of the struggle, as the strike degenerated and the workers became more and more disillusioned, the latent nationalism and racism came to the fore:

"The strikers sang the 'Red Flag'...and marched under a banner which proclaimed 'Workers of the World Unite and Fight for a White South Africa'. Despite attempts by the Council of Action to prevent the strike becoming a crude racist campaign, striker commandos began attacking Africans and Indians...Nationalist politicians appeared on the strike platforms alongside Communists, and at a mass rally in Johannesburg strikers overwhelmingly passed a resolution calling for a Nationalist-Labour coup d'etat... The government called out aircraft and artillery to smash the strike, killing 230 workers and injuring hundreds more."  
African Trade Unions, Ian Davies P.57/58.)

How far this cooperation with the Nationalists by the South African Communist Party was the adoption of the Cominterns policy of 'United Fronts', or was simply an opportunistic tactic

determined by local conditions, it is difficult to tell.

The black workers in South Africa form an unskilled labour force who perform low-paid work in the textile, canning and mass production industries, as well as working as domestic servants and urban utility workers, eg dustmen. The conditions under which they live form a fertile operating-ground for groups like the African National Congress (A.N.C.) and the South African 'Communist' Party, which call on the black workers to fight against white oppression and for "national liberation". But one thing is evident; the task of the black working class is not "national liberation". To struggle for black capitalism instead of white capitalism would be no advance. To see how "national liberation" brings about no improvement in the conditions of the working-class, the black South African workers need only to look at their next-door neighbour, Mozambique. In this 'marxist' state, conditions are so bad, that thousands of workers prefer to go to South Africa, where they can obtain a better price for their labour-power. In South Africa, the agricultural labour is done by seasonal workers from Mozambique (and Malawi), and the mine workers are mainly recruited from the same countries on a contract basis, from different tribes. These workers are sent back home when their labour is no longer required, and in doing this, the pro-apartheid Afrikaans capitalists hope to prevent the formation of a permanent working class. The wages and conditions of these workers are much worse than those of the urban, native South African black workers, and thus we should see the class being split in three ways, and not just simply along racial lines.

Whether all these strata in the working-class in South Africa can overcome their differences in the years ahead remains in the realm of conjecture. But one thing is certain; this is the only way forward, and it is the perspective that revolutionaries must call for.

#### THE CRISIS HITS SOUTH AFRICA.

These recent struggles in South Africa are all a part of the response of the class worldwide, a class which is made to pay for the capitalist crisis. Even South Africa, with the richest mineral resources in the world, with a super-exploited working class, and an efficient regime of repression, has been severely hit by the economic crisis. And the symptoms are the same as elsewhere in the world; a currency crisis, inflation in double figures, and unemployment among black workers at 20%. For the first time since



the war, the South African economy has experienced a negative growth rate (see table on preceding page). The recent slump in the price of gold (the main export of the country) has now added to the problems facing the economy. In fact, unless the gold price rises again, South Africa is heading towards disaster. As the Financial Times put it on 23rd. July,

"Falling (an increase in gold prices) the going will be rough, with no hope of reflation... And it looks, in the meantime, as if there could be bankruptcies and much more unemployment."

South Africa's reserves of foreign currency have fallen so low, that the Financial Times estimates that they are only enough to pay for three weeks' imports! As a result, it has been forced as were Britain and Italy, to go cap in hand to the U.S.A.-dominated International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) to negotiate a huge loan; the 'strings attached' to this lead us into an analysis of the perspectives facing the South African capitalists.

#### NO WAY OUT.

The South African ruling class has stumbled into the crisis like a man blindfolded and with his hands tied; the situation facing them is bleak indeed, and they have very little room for manoeuvre, probably less than any ruling class in the world.

South Africa is dominated by American imperialism, and must in the final analysis serve the interests of the U.S.A. Dependent as it is on U.S. arms supplies, on the mass of American capital invested in South Africa, and now on credit from the U.S.-dominated I.M.F., South Africa must toe the line. This domination was made abundantly clear during the recent war in Angola, when South Africa intervened against the M.P.L.A. (1) When ordered by the U.S. to pull out her troops, South Africa had no alternative but to obey. At the moment, the apartheid policy of South Africa is an embarrassment to the U.S.A., as it tries too woo black African states (and those in the Middle-East) from Russian influence. Kissinger is trying to force South Africa to 'reform'. In this he is supported by the bulk of the industrial interests in South Africa, who find the apartheid system a drawback to economic advance. This is because of its role in limiting the mobility of labour via the oppressive Pass Laws, and also because it limits the formation of a skilled, educated work force. But the seemingly logical option of 'liberalisation' is in fact closed to the South African rulers.

Those in South Africa's white population who support such a policy as is favoured by the U.S. and industrial capitalism (which, if not state-owned like the steelworks, is mainly international) are the English-speaking minority, who could not gain control of the State. This is the reserve of the

(1) See "Angola: Natural Paradise, Capitalist Inferno" in W.V.17

Afrikaners, and it is precisely the Afrikaans capitalists whose material basis is apartheid, since they are the agricultural and mining interests, who can function quite well with cheap, unskilled black labour. Even were the Afrikaan politicians to be convinced, that the interests of South Africa as a whole lay in reform, such a policy would lead to a huge white backlash on the one hand, and to an increase in the restlessness of the black population on the other, that could only lead to a bloodbath.

Indeed, sections of the Afrikaan capitalists have been calling for quite the opposite, for an intensification of apartheid, and pushing on with the policy of the creation of Bantustans. These are African homelands, created on the worst land, in which every South African black must take out citizenship, leaving them with only migrant status in South Africa itself. Since most of the blacks have never been to these homelands' the turmoil which will result if the policy is enforced is easily imagined. In addition, to push ahead with such repressive policies can only lead in the end to an erosion of South Africa's industrial base, and leave it as a mining and agricultural country, with sophisticated industrial capitalism unable to function.

The most likely course that the South African bourgeoisie will follow, will be to adopt a few window dressing measures, like allowing blacks to train for low grade skills, ending some restrictions on their movement, etc., and at the same time to strengthen their system of physical repression (the Army, police etc.) With a foot in both camps, they will try to 'sit it out', in the hope that an economic recovery will be forthcoming. For the moment they have little to fear; though it seems as if South Africa is surrounded by hostile black states, they are so inferior militarily to South Africa that they pose no threat, and in any case many depend economically on the hated 'white oppressor'. As long as U.S. support is forthcoming, South Africa will survive, 'freezing' its social relations. If "black liberation" comes to South Africa, it will be courtesy of American imperialism.

For the working-class, black as well as white, the next few years under crisis-ridden capitalism will be bleak. Increasing unemployment, decline in real wages and general deterioration of living standards will be the capitalist strategy to help slow down the decline of the economy. We can only hope that the struggle against this decline will bring all the workers in South Africa into a common alliance against capitalism; the enemy which they can fight together, or which will destroy them together in a racial bloodbath. At any rate, we can expect no lead to the world proletariat from South Africa; as in certain other areas, they can only follow where more class-conscious sections of workers have shown the way in a revolutionary upheaval, and after a long experience of crisis and class struggle has begun to weaken class divisions.

# STRUGGLE IN SPAIN

## C.W.C. INTRODUCTION

The following article has been produced by a group involved in the recent workers' struggles in Spain. It has been translated into French, and then into English, and we regret any inaccuracies and stiffness in style this may have caused. Despite this, the main conclusions of the text emerge clearly, so that English-speaking workers can see that their Spanish brothers have arrived at an advanced stage of struggle, that is only dimly perceived over here.

Workers the world over are being told that the Spanish workers must first win the struggle for 'democracy' - a parliament, free elections, political parties, free trades unions etc., so that they can be better armed for the class struggle. It's the same line which successfully helped to bind the workers behind the Republican Government in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. This article, however, makes it absolutely clear that there are no intermediate stages for the class struggle; the workers must fight on their own class terrain against capitalism. And today in Spain the 'democracy' of the opposition (a coalition of Liberals, Social Democrats, Communists etc.) and the 'dictatorship' of the hard line Franco remnants, are but different masks for the same thing - the rule of capitalism. Today, Spanish capitalism needs democracy in order to gain entry to the E.E.C. (Common Market) and to get loans from the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.), for its crisis-ridden economy.

With inflation running at 2% and growing unemployment, the workers in Spain have no interest in 'democracy', but must strike out on their own class road. The article stresses the need for the struggle to be independent of, and against, all the capitalist parties of right or left, and it shows how the workers, in struggle, have discovered the need to create an autonomous organization to carry it out; the Workers' Assembly. The need for such an organization flows from the depth of the crisis in Spain, and the response of the Spanish working class.

However, if we say anything by way of criticism, it is because only through a deep examination of our own international movement can the working class ever challenge and destroy the capitalist system, and bring about a classless society. The Spanish workers show no lack of combativity, or eagerness for the struggle, but as the text shows, they have not yet fully seen where their own class interests lie; this is only natural, since clarity comes through the struggle itself. The next stage of the struggle can only come about through a conscious intervention. In reality, the

most advanced workers, such as the authors of this text, are charged with the task of working out a policy that will bring a communist society many steps nearer. To do this means they must understand the tasks the class faces; the suppression of the bourgeois state, communisation of industry, and extension of the revolution abroad. Like the other groups emerging in the Spanish working class during the recent struggles, and rejecting the trades unions, the workers' commissions and the Communist Party, the authors of this text must realise their political obligations, and that within the Spanish workers movement a tremendous amount of work remains to be done. In addition to intervention within the class movement, it is necessary to work towards the formation of a communist organization.

The second criticism is linked to the first. We have always argued that a 'correct' organizational form of the workers in struggle, is no guarantee against the movement going wrong. At the present stage of the crisis, where links between capitalist states are still strong, and where the room for compromise has not yet run out, the Spanish ruling class (of whatever faction) will still be able to draw the Assemblies of Delegates into negotiations about wages and conditions, which will pull the Assemblies onto the terrain of the reform of capitalism. The text tells us the workers' commissions were able to out-flank the Assemblies of Delegates, and in the longer term they can only become the shop-floor basis of the bureaucratised workers' commissions. Indeed these commissions emerged in the 1960's as genuine expressions of the workers in struggle, and were gradually taken over by the 'communist' party. The same happened with the factory committees thrown up after April 1974 in Portugal as clear class expressions; now they function like shop stewards committees, controlled by the trades unions. Any organization which aims to represent the mass of the workers, while those masses (and the situation), are not revolutionary, will end serving the interests of capital. The only alternatives are to become integrated into capitalism, or to dissolve once the struggle is over. Only in a revolutionary situation can the class create permanent organs of struggle. The failure to realise this is the main weakness of the text. Despite this, we are pleased to bring it to the attention of English-speaking workers.

C.W.O. (Sept.76)

REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES NO.5

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# WORKERS COMMISSIONS

against the class

The metalworkers (engineers) strike in the province of Barcelona is part of a vast strike movement in the most diverse regions of the country since the beginning of the year, provoked by the political, economic and social crisis shaking Spanish capitalism. All branches of the economy have been hit, and in the months of February and March alone, a total of 50 million hours of work have been lost in strikes.

In our province (Catalonia) the movement has been uninterrupted since the beginning of the year. Constantly, in Barcelona itself, as well as the suburbs and in many other towns, groups of workers on strike have appeared. The banks, building works, textiles, railways, education, engineering etc., have all been hit by strikes. Parallel with these sectional struggles, have erupted others notable for their length and bitterness like that of the engineers of Terrassa, or the general strike of Bajo Llobregat. Other strikes which were limited to particular enterprises but also important were: PIREMA (a bitter struggle with many imprisoned), INGRA (almost four months of strike), HARRY-WALKER, MELER (four months), ALCHEMICA, BULTACO (four months and still continuing) etc. We should also mention those strikes which hit all or almost all of the branches of different firms as well as strikes which were industry wide: Michelin, Roca, the telephones and posts.

In this context of widespread class struggle, the metal workers strike, which has come to involve 340,000 workers forced the attention of all the forces of order, from the heads of the enterprises, to the government and opposition. One could sense the fear which this movement had inspired.

The government and the bosses tried to prevent the strike by conceding the 1½% wage increase the day before the strike was due to begin and then broke off negotiations on the collective agreement, ignoring all the other demands. In the face of this provocative manoeuvre the Assembly of Delegates decided on the 21st of April to call for a strike on the following day. On their part, the Workers Commissions (1), while never ceasing to lament on the unwillingness of the bosses to negotiate, supported the strike summons, but as we will see later, did not put it into operation, except in certain areas, and prevented it

(1) These were organisations created by the workers during the Franco regime. They were gradually taken over and are now totally controlled by the Communist Party. They now form a bureaucratic apparatus.

in the big enterprises where the Commissions were dominant.

The objective of the Commissions is to be recognised by capitalism as 'valid representatives' of the workers, but they have failed to achieve this, in so far as the negotiations on the collective agreement had been broken off. But events developed in such a way, that the impression remains that the Workers Commissions and capitalism had come to an implicit, if not explicit, agreement to strangle or limit the strike and avoid the danger of an explosion in all the branches of industry in the province, and the provoking of a spontaneous and uncontrolled general strike of the type which both capitalism and the 'workers' organisations' fear. These workers' organisations are, in the last analysis, only the expression of another form of capitalism - state capitalism. One could conjecture that the P.S.U.C.(Communist Party of Catalonia), and the P.T.E.(Spanish Workers' Party) were asked by the Assembly of Catalonia and the Council of Political Forces, to assume their responsibilities in maintaining order.

Once the government took responsibility for the dispute, and took over the role of arbitration, it was clear that the conflict with capitalism was leading to a conflict with the state. The fear that this would lead to an enormous politicisation of the struggle gripped the 'democratic' and 'peaceful' forces, and the Workers' Commissions began to encourage workers to break the strike. In their strongholds, such as SEAT, Bajo-Llobregat and Tarrasa, work continued, while in hundreds of small and medium enterprises, the workers had already taken to the streets. The appeal of the Workers Commissions was followed blindly by their own militants, even though they were denounced as scabs by workers in some enterprises, and ran the risk of physical attack in the Workers Assemblies. This occurred in SEAT, PEGASO, HISPANO OLIVETTI, HARRY WALKER etc.

The consequences of these manoeuvrings was that the bureaucrats of the Workers Commissions succeeded in limiting the strike to 100,000 workers at its strongest moments, and the strike was therefore not the general strike of metalworkers which had originally been the aim. The combativity of the workers was shown by the formation of pickets, fights with police, assemblies in the streets and in churches, and by numerous demonstrations. Despite brutal police assaults on demonstrators and pickets, and the arrest of dozens of the workers, the 'leaders' recommended "calm and order". They tried to keep the workers silent on the demonstrations, in order to "avoid provocation". Then, when the bosses announced their renewed willingness to negotiate, a return to work was ordered, without any guarantee as to the release of those arrested, or to the granting of the original demands of the strikers.

But in spite of the importance of these facts, it was in

another area that the Workers Commissions played their most negative role, and here, if only in a limited way, they met with some opposition. It was in the Assemblies of Delegates (elected in the factories) that they most systematically obstructed the struggle. They introduced into the Assemblies the idea that they should participate in the commission dealing with the negotiations, which was composed of bureaucrats of the C.N.S. (state unions), elected at the second or third remove.(2). Naturally, many opposed participation in such a racket, but in the name of unity the Workers' Commissions were able to get their view carried. It is necessary to underline the role played by the Maoist groups, and the majority of the Trotskyist groups, who accepted such a position in the name of unity. But once the strike had been broken, they salved their consciences by accusing the P.S.U.C. and the P.T.E. of being "traitors".

Interminable discussions took place, which resulted in the Assembly being emptied of all content; it retained only an "information" capacity, but lost all executive functions to the trades union bureaucrats of the C.N.S. However, it is not enough to denounce the various parties to explain the weaknesses of the struggle. At bottom, what was demonstrated was the lack of consciousness of the workers, who were incapable of opposing this political manipulation.

We, the metalworkers of Barcelona, have given proof of our great combativity, but also of a terrible political short-sightedness and lack of political understanding, the fruit of the obscurity of the last few years. But little by little we are learning the lessons of our recent struggles. In this one we saw how to form pickets, to fight in the street, the need to hold permanent assemblies, to organize street demonstrations in spite of the police. On the political level, the progress was less evident.

#### APPEAL TO ALL THE WORKING CLASS!

We, the workers of BULTACO, have been on strike since April 5 to pursue our demands (against lay-offs, increase for all workers of 5000 pesetas a month, 30 days holiday a year), aware that our problem is not limited to our situation, but affects all, and we invite the working class to show solidarity with our struggle. Economic and social exploitation, should constitute the basis of our unity, as an expression of our class consciousness.

Just as the product of our labour is international, capitalism which exploits us knows no frontiers or races. We recognise that we belong to the working class, which is international, and carries in it, and it alone, as a class conscious of its struggles, the future of the world, which is today in the hands of capital, and which is for all humanity, a world of misery and oppression. Workers of the world, the workers of BULTACO salute you fraternally, like our fathers yesterday, and sons tomorrow! Assembly of Bultaco Workers, San Adrian de Besos, Barcelona. 10 May 1976.

But little by little we are seeing our own specific class interests, which are incompatible with political manoeuvring, with the interests of the bourgeoisie which talks much of democracy. In reality, only a concentrated struggle against capitalism can solve the problems that are posed for the workers.

The Assembly of Delegates, despite its deformations and limitations, has shown that it alone is the real alternative proletarian organization, in so far as it assumes the tasks of orientation, co-ordination and information which are posed. In addition, it tried to unify with other organizations of a similar type, in order to lead to the construction of an Assembly of Delegates of Barcelona, which could co-ordinate with those of other towns and regions, and lead to effective co-ordination of all the struggles of the class over the whole country. Only in this way will it be able to break with the class collaboration of the present struggles, and arrive at the autonomous organization of the class. This must be outside the counterrevolutionary alternatives of the elitist cliques claiming to represent the workers, and break with the trades union organization of the struggle, legal or not, as well as the capitalist politics which the unions practise.

Only with this perspective in mind will we be able to go forward to the creation of a class organization-the Assembly of Delegates- which will be capable of breaking with this capitalist society in which we live, and of organizing the social revolution as a step towards the construction of a communist society. Only this can resolve the problems faced by the proletariat of Spain and the whole world; For the organization of the class!

For the autonomy of the class!

For the world communist revolution!

Barcelona May, 1976.

- (2). The C.N.S. were unions set up under the Franco regime, without the right to strike, and controlled by the State. The Communist Party took part in elections to the C.N.S., and now controls many of them. (pl4).

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C.W.O. CONTACT MEETINGS.

As an effort to explain our politics to a wider audience, and to involve contacts closer with the C.W.O.'s work, we are organizing a series of contact meetings over the coming winter. Those already planned are;

Hungary 1956 (Liverpool) Oct 22 or 23.

Spain today (Manchester) Nov. 12th.

For further details, write to the group address(front cover).

# SCOTTISH NATIONALISM

The finding of oil off the Scottish coast during the present economic crisis has given seeming support to the argument of the Scottish National Party (S.N.P.) that Scotland will be better off separate from Britain. This has caused the government to panic and move ahead with plans for devolution which will give Scotland a large degree of self-government. Revolutionaries need to combat the myths being circulated by the S.N.P. that Scottish workers can escape the crisis by the setting up of a Scottish government.

'National Independence' must be approached by the working class on a historical basis. There is no eternal 'right' to national self-determination. On the contrary, "the proletariat is the negation of all nationality" (Marx). Around the turn of this century, with the division of the world among several big powers, the independent development of any new nations onto the world market became impossible. All possible support by the working class for one bourgeois bloc against another ended and the uneasy spectre of 'National Unity' was forever laid to rest. It is using this approach that we must now look at Scottish Nationalism. (1)

## SCOTLAND BEFORE THE UNION.

Even the briefest examination of Scottish history provides little or no support for nationalist claims of a nation 'One and Indivisible'. Prior to the Norman conquest in the eleventh century, Scotland was a collection of subsistence, tribal units with various ethnic groupings - Celts, Norse, Teutonic - thus making impossible any conception of 'nationality'. The Normans brought the South and East into a feudal economic and political entity and Catholicism became dominant, though the North West was to continue its tribal ways for several hundred years. The secession of the feudal barons (all French speaking!) led by Robert the Bruce from England in the 13th century had little effect on the population or the Scottish economy which remained very backward. Only in the 16th Century, with the emergence of Calvinism, did a progressive element enter the feeble Scottish state and found support from the weak bourgeoisie. From the beginning this movement sought union with protestant England and although this was to be a long time coming the revolution of 1559, capturing Church lands and spreading education and the 'work ethic', laid a favourable foundation for capitalism and the temporary unification with England (1648-1660) did much to finally undermine feudalism. From 1660 to 1700 frantic attempts

were made to develop an independent Scottish capitalism. A vast public subscription raised £150,000 in the disastrous scheme to colonise Darien in South America - losing 25% of Scotland's capital at a time when she was already losing her markets in France and the Baltic due to the mercantilist policies of stronger states. Finally, in 1707, the Scottish parliament accepted a voluntary political union with England.

This was not the 'sell-out' or 'treachery' of Nationalist melodrama but the logical and inevitable outcome of economic necessity. The union can not be compared with England's domination of Southern Ireland where rack-renting by absentee land-lords led to economic stagnation. In Scotland the bourgeoisie and nobility were left in control of the Church, Law, and Education while Scottish merchants were admitted into English domestic and overseas markets. Prior to 1707 Scotland was characterised by her feebleness and instability and the Union came as a voluntary act by the local ruling-class and bourgeoisie which, conscious of its weakness, had always sought such a union.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN SCOTLAND.

After a period of crisis and readjustment the effects of the union began to tell. English capital expanded the coal industry and created Europe's biggest iron-works at Carron; the 'Equivalent' - £150,000 compensation from England for the Darien disaster further stimulated advance. Glasgow boomed with its new-found access to American tobacco market, & it was the capital from this industry which was the basis of the industrialisation of Clydeside. The taming of the Highlands brought raw materials for the growing textile towns. None of this economic development could have occurred without Union. An industrial and commercial bourgeoisie grew up regarding itself as British and produced representatives - Adam Smith, Ferguson, David Hume, Walter Scott etc., who were to have world-wide effect on bourgeois thinking. Reaction to this movement at this time came from petty-bourgeois radicalism and artisan revolt but these occurred alongside similar reactions in England and none assumed a nationalist form

The economic development of Scotland was now running parallel to that of England and it was now no more possible to talk of a separate Scottish economy than a separate Lancashire one. By 1820, a working class had been formed, and utopian socialist thinking began to take hold, eg Owenism. From 1815 to 1820, Britain as a whole saw waves of working class rioting, machine breaking and demonstrations, aiming at a reform of the atrocious political and economic servitude of the workers. In Scotland, this culminated in the first mass strike in proletarian history, when 60,000 mainly textile workers stopped work in May, demanding social reform. In certain places actual uprisings took place, and clashes with the Army led to deaths, followed by execution of the leaders. The nationalist school of falsification has recently tried to

claim these events for the separatist cause, but the class composition, (and political aims) of the movement was identical to that of movements in England at the same time, and the 'rising' of 1820 was actually timed to co-incide with similar risings in the south.

After this period the "Scottish Economy" moved, with that of the rest of the U.K., from the cotton to the iron and coal phase of industrialisation, and from there to the growth of the steel-using industries. By about 1900 Scotland-like Wales and the north of England, had about 25% of its active population engaged in the heavy industries of coal, steel, shipbuilding and engineering. After the 1820 rising, the class devoted itself to trades union, and reform activity. In common with the class in the rest of the U.K., Scottish workers supported the Chartist movement of 1839-48, organizing mass demonstrations and sometimes strikes for reform and the right to vote. Despite very moderate leaders, the rank and file occasionally burst forth, eg. in the riots in Dundee in 1842 and Glasgow in 1846. Economic prosperity after 1850 killed the movement, and then trades unions of the skilled workers began to win legality and high wages, followed by the unionisation of the unskilled workers after 1880. Again, none of these movements claimed nationalist aims. By now Scotland was split like England, along class lines, and not like Ireland across class lines into pro and anti-nationalists.

#### FIRST WORLD WAR AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE.

The imperialist war with Germany, breaking out in 1914, led to a great radicalisation of the British working class, and this was especially true on Clydeside, where a proletarian aristocracy of engineering workers was dealt hammer blows by dilution and deteriorating economic conditions. During the strikes which marked the war years, the Shop Stewards and Workers' Committee movement was developed on Clydeside, in common with advanced centres in England, such as Sheffield and Barrow. Similar rank and file movements emerged at this time in the south Wales coalfield. Despite weaknesses often traceable to the pre-war influence of syndicalist ideas (such as refusal to take an explicit defeatist position on the war, localism, and a tendency to sectionalism), the advanced elements in these movements saw the post war tasks as being revolutionary. Socialist groups, like the Socialist Labour Party (S.L.P.) gained great influence among the workers of Clydeside, but despite their revolutionary opposition to the war as an organization, within the Shop Stewards' movement they confined themselves to a 'service' role. For this they were correctly criticised by the group around John Maclean, who also opposed the imperialist war. It is important to point out that the opposition to the war in Scotland, culminating in the strike of May 1918 was on an internationalist basis, that is that the war was a capitalist war aimed against the workers of all countries. Again the contrast with Ireland is striking; here the motto of even erstwhile socialists like Connolly was

that the war was an "English" war, with nothing in it for Ireland.

The victory of British capitalism in 1918 helped ensure that despite activities in the police and navy, the advanced sectors of the class were isolated from the mass of the class. But the agreement did not subside without a struggle, and in 1919 when unemployment rising, mass strikes broke out in Glasgow and Belfast. In Glasgow 100,000 came out, pickets closed down the factories, mass meetings solidified the conflict, and a daily strike bulletin was produced. In this struggle the I.L.P. again showed its limitations by following a service role, acting in the strike committee and producing the strike bulletin, but not putting forward any independent revolutionary position. The state responded by rushing in troops to Glasgow, and confining local troops, suspected of disaffection, to barracks. Virtual martial law was declared, mass meetings attacked and broken up, and the strike committee arrested and deported; this repression finally broke the back of the strike. Again, however, one thing is clear, at no time was the slightest nationalist demand put forward in this struggle, at no time was the local bourgeoisie-'the Hun in our backyard'-as they were called, seen as any better than the "English" variety.

In reaction to the smashing of the 1919 strike a swing towards parliamentarianism took place in the class, with the Independent Labour Party(I.L.P.) gaining support as a left social democratic alternative to the Labour Party. It was also at this time, as the flow of working class activity subsided, that a voice for "scottish socialism" and a "scottish breakaway" began to be heard. John Maclean with his "Scottish Republicanism" typifying the demoralised slide of former class militants into a pathetic localism. While the workers had been on the offensive, nationalism could make no headway-the two movements shared no common cause. Even Maclean, despite his stature in the workers' ranks, found few to follow him down the nationalist path.

#### THE RISE OF NATIONALISM.

The reasons we have dealt at length with Scotland's history, is to show that nationalism has at no time served the interests of the Scottish economy, or of the Scottish working class. In the period of capitalism's dynamic growth, the Scottish bourgeoisie identified itself exclusively with British capitalism, while the Scottish worker has seen himself as a part of the British working class, and indeed (in periods of high activity) as part of the world working class. It is only in the period of capitalist decadence that Scottish nationalism raises its head.

Where then have today's nationalists sprung from? Britain has been sliding down the first division of capitalist powers

since the turn of the century, and her inability to benefit from the boom following the second world war has increased her rate of decline. The effects of this decline have been particularly but not exclusively, felt in the outlying regions, eg. Northern Ireland, north England, Wales and Scotland, where the emphasis on heavy industry has required heavy capital investments to maintain competitiveness on the world market-capital investment which has become more and more unavailable. This has not been the result of "Whitehall Bureaucrats" or "Sassenach Prejudice", but of the declining position of Britain in the world economy.

By the 1920's certain sectors of the bourgeoisie in Scotland not directly involved in production began to believe that salvation lay in separation from England. In 1928 a motley collection of clergymen, lawyers and intellectuals of sundry tiny nationalist groupings united to form the Scottish National Party (S.N.P.). Their battle-cry till the discovery of oil, was that Scotland could survive on the revenue from whisky production! This lunatic idea is now forgotten, but it kept them warm as they staggered into the 60's as a tiny, forlorn group. By the later 1960's the crisis had begun to hit the petty-bourgeoisie (2), such as shopkeepers, small businessmen, fishermen, farmers, and they flocked to the S.N.P. for deliverance, since none of the 'official' capitalist parties were interested in their plight. These strata still form the hard core membership, along with the already-mentioned professional groupings. The discovery of oil off the Scottish coast, at last gave them a semblance of credibility, and "It's Scotland's Oil" quickly became their battlecry.

A cursory glance at capital ownership in Scotland, however, reveals that most of heavy industry is state-owned (mines, steel, car industry, shipyards etc.), while light industry is dominated by British or foreign(mainly U.S.) capital. For example, "Scottish" ownership in electrical engineering and electronics amounts to a mere 8% of the whole. The small-time capitalist supporters of the S.N.P. who lay claim to "Scotland's glorious future" would be hard put to find the capital resources necessary to build one drilling platform, never mind the dozens needed, the thousands of miles of pipeline, supply fleets and industries, refineries and technological back-up. If North Sea Oil were truly Scottish Oil, then it would never see the light of day. "Scotland's Oil" is the property of international capital, and even that with the deepening of the crisis, is beginning to doubt whether North Sea Oil operations can continue for much longer to be profitable.

Another important point to make is that even if Scotland could exploit "her" oil, any new life pumped into the Scottish economy, and "benefits" for the Scottish workers would be short-lived. The recently published summer issue of the Scottish Economic Bulletin forecasts that Scotland's spin-off from North Sea Oil has peaked, and will now decline. The proletariat is an international class, and is being attacked by the effects of the world economic crisis; "Scottish Oil" is no way out of the grim future

facing the Scottish working class. Indeed, most workers realise this, and their atomised votes which have brought the S.N.P. greater support than all other parties barring the Labour Party, is a passive 'protest' vote; very few workers are involved actively in the nationalist ranks. Not only have the workers few illusions, even the S.N.P. is now grudgingly being forced to admit that "going it alone" is impossible. Recent proposals from Dr. McIntyre, the party president, have stated that,

"Scotland's interests would be best served by remaining with England a member of the Common Market, so ensuring continued access for each country's exports to the home market of the other."

#### THE WORKERS AND THE CRISIS.

After 1919, the Scottish working class, demoralised and defeated, greeted the crisis years of the 1920's and 30's with apathy and despair, and was ready prey for the slavishness of World War II. But today it shares the confidence and combativity of the international working class. Since the mid 1960's Scotland has experienced working class reaction to the effects of the crisis, witnessed all over the world. Car workers, municipal workers, ship builders, print workers, building workers and miners have all been engaged in struggle in the past few years. The high point of the struggle was in Clydeside in late 1974, when a wave of unofficial strikes, involving about 35,000 workers erupted. The most significant of these, the lorry drivers strike, sent flying pickets to England to spread the struggle, and elected a rotating strike committee, to ensure mass participation in the struggle. It has only been when isolation and demoralisation set in that the slightest nationalist response has occurred-the Glasgow Daily Express in 1974 being the prime example of this (3). The tasks facing the Scottish workers today are those facing the international working class. Through their struggles they must re-learn the main lesson of the revolutionary wave of 1917-21—"The Workers have no Fatherland". "Nationalism" has no material basis today; it is a reactionary MYTH, and must be fought.

#### NOTES:

- (1) For a fuller treatment of the issue of nationalism, see Revolutionary Perspectives No2, "Marxism and the Irish Question", available at 35 (post paid) from group address.
- (2) For an explanation of why the crisis hits the petty-capitalists first, see the text in Revolutionary Perspectives No3, "Crisis and the Class Struggle"
- (3) The experience of the "Express" struggle and "Co-op" is analysed in detail in Workers Voice No 13. (10p. post pd.).

# **WORKERS VOICE**

# COMMUNIST WORKERS ORGANISATION

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# **OUTH AFRICA : ANC WAITS IN THE WINGS**

the death toll continues to mount in the black townships South Africa is moving daily closer to outright civil war. The slums and ghettos have failed to quell this desperate anger. The people are faced with the conditions of exploitation and oppression which have seen three and a half millions of people leave only 10% of the homes in the last ten years and find themselves either permanently undernourished. Unlike earlier events like Sharpeville in 1960 the apartheid regime has not been able to find enough to do in enough to restore order. Instead the lager has begun to break up with the masses of the multi-nationalities, the leaders of the ANC and the members of the Methodist Church (which used to provide the religious justification for apartheid) having crossed the border to discuss a new order with the members of the African National Congress (ANC). Whilst Bothe was denouncing his former allies as traitors there are other signs that the old order is changing. In the last election the ANC's list on his liberal wing there are calls for more rapid "reform" of apartheid the right to strike and the right to form unions. There has been making election gains from the support of Sothe's efforts to restore order. The ANC has been the sign of the whites in areas already recognise that the game plan, at least the only growth era of the white Afrikanerdom is in the sector of the white firms who hire a majority to recruit white homes there has been a dramatic fall in the numbers of whites falling to 1985 from over 1.5 million in 1980 (a whole of last year to nearly 800,000 for first nine months of this year). Those who can afford to buy their houses in Rhodesia a few years ago are now willing if they can get anyone to buy them (mostly) to return to Mugabe's Zimbabwe on the promise of compensation to make it if, for whilst to live there.

## IMPERIALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

: is not the world's press which has

attempt by both sides to reach agreement. Whilst Relly's side made concessions to the ANC's state capitalist, nationalist ideology Tambo is reputed to have agreed that large sections of the economy would be "left open to private enterprise". The nationalists thus represent the best hope for capitalism. In our last issue we pointed to the fact that the capitalist leaders were "ending apartheid to save capitalism". Even the bourgeois press have recognised since that

"Capitalism in South Africa has now entered its fight for survival. It faces the risk that, unless it can distance itself from apartheid, it will go down the drain with it."

This is why the struggle against apartheid is not in itself enough. It has to be widened into a struggle against all aspects of capitalism, including against multinational firms as well as African capitalists and also against the nationalist black bourgeoisie that is waiting in the wings. Although the workers of South Africa have not yet created their own independent weapon of emancipation, the struggle against apartheid is furnishing the conditions which can lead to the creation of communist nuclei within the working class. It is our task as communists to provide the political critique of all

The capitalist factions in South Africa and not to succumb to the prevailing current of anti-apartheid activism. Only in this way will we forge the essential basis for the liberation of all the world's workers - the communist programme.

# IGHTING A FUTURE

# I BRITAIN : FIGHTING FOR A FUTURE

BOTHA'S FRIENDS

however not yet completely alone. The campaigns of recent converts to apartheid ideas in the USA and despite investment away from South Africa is still the key to international port. In fact it is not surprising the louder any government is in its defense of apartheid the smaller its influence in South Africa. This is what Reagan tried to pretend, he

ting between police and unemployed again erupted in six of Britain's s, sparked off by police harassment e. Large scale unrest occurred th and Brixton, and in Tottenham e took over the area for two hours e could regain control. Police e bombed and riot police pelted e bombs and bullets. Journalists lans one came under attack or out of the area.

ESS STRUGGLE NOT PASS PASS

Bothreka knows as the Commonwealth. Bothreka has something investments in South Africa. The job of extracting them is one. Both Reagan and Thatcher to reform apartheid in order to keep their political power intact but they recognise that this very difficult for Botha to achieve determination of the South African government in the growing civil one hand, and without whites that he is some kind of clown the present revolt by his attempt the very messy aspects of the situation. It is difficult to point to more violent confrontations between the black population is no fixed to that or that township or restriction on the of the struggle for democracy.

As in 1961  
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The press have done their best to present the revolts as riots. Handbooks you were against Asians. On the contrary, as sparked off when black youths laid on an Asian man being arrested outside a shop, looted were simply because of the goods belonging to Asians. But black and shops were also looted and white, young youths were doing the looting. People near the centre of the revolt pushed.

The anger was directed against, Mr. Douglas Hurd arrived on was shown with a sickening crowd. His arrival sparked unrest". When he tried to inter-

The intensity of the revolts became clearer, especially when battles in Tottenham left one injured and 1 dead, the police, politicians, and black trade unions and black community leaders eagerly joined each other in denouncing the "racism" asinal. All conveniently forgot that the original violence was by the police at the Notting Hill Jarrett or that the Brixton rebels were started by the forces of the state shooting Glyndebourne.

The press attempted to explain the revolts had been caused by "financially-entitled" people who had lost control of their lives drink and drugs. The Times suggested the northworts riots had occurred because the police had failed to clear the streets of cannabis. It couldn't have been

# WELFARE STATE : WHERE NEXT?

The term "Welfare state" was originally coined to contrast Britain's so-called "peace-loving democracy" with Hitler's "warfare state". The decisive influence in the evolution of the welfare state was the 2nd World War, a ruling factor which ensured that the post-war capitalist society would never be threatened by working class revolution. In Britain where the working class had been kept off under-class legislation, the seminal document was the Beveridge Plan of 1942. After the deprivations of the Thirties, Beveridge emerged like the hero of a modern play. He envisioned a society "free from want, want", disease, want, squalor, ignorance. The biggest giant of them all - unemployment, termed "idleness" by Beveridge, would be overcome by Keynesian economic policies of state-induced demand.

## ORIGINS AND POST-WAR DEVELOPMENT

Following the defeat of the European working class, reactionaries in Britain were able to gradually revise the process of capital accumulation and the rate of profit and the rate of surplus value began to increase in the 1940s. Moreover, the war had demanded to the bourgeoisie the virtue of healthy, disciplined, reasonably educated working class, one capable of handling the new technology required for a period of reconstruction and economic expansion.

With the Labour Party in the wartime coalition, the traditions under Bevin, Attlee and the series of corporatist agreements, the quid pro quo for this class collaboration was to be full employment and welfare reforms. This formed the basis for the post-war "settlement" between the classes throughout the late 40s under the Labour Government. Expenditure on state social services rose from 10% of GNP in 1945 to 28.8% in 1970. By 1960 however, large cracks were appearing in the economic orthodoxy which oversaw the post-war boom. The rate of profit began to decline and the working classes gradually gave way to direct attempts to limit wage increases by way of incomes policies. The mid 60s also saw the "descent" of the Conservative Labour government in various exposes of the time; this added to pressures for more welfare expenditure which continued to grow as a proportion of GNP until the mid 70s.

Having suffered no major deficits since 1926, with relatively full employment, the introduction of the post-war welfare state did lead to an overall improvement in the living conditions of British workers. However, under decadent capitalism's informal spiral of crisis, we see that the working classes, particularly were bound to be temporary and short lived, in effect limited to one genera-

tion. The fundamental purpose for the ruling class had been to create a labour force that was both physically fit and ideologically integrated, one capable of producing its labour power for the greater good of profitability on an increasingly competitive world market. Here too their success is of an historically brief duration.

## THE MYTH OF THE NEUTRALITY OF THE WELFARE STATE

The capitalist state is neither a relatively autonomous political institution as bourgeois ideology suggests, nor is it merely the mouthpiece of the actions of the capitalist. It serves to produce and reproduce the conditions for capital accumulation to occur and at different periods assumed different forms according to the historical specific demands of the law of value. Thus the "welfare state" was discovered to be essential to the survival of capitalist society, not least because it served to maintain the capitalist heartlands and at the same time prevents the destruction of the labour force by capitalist competition. The state retains an apparently objective character in this process of the domination of capital whilst guaranteeing (as far as it is able) and regulating the conditions for capitalism's survival.

The welfare state is a crucial apparatus, though incomplete, for putting individual citizenship and the welfare of the nation before class loyalty or organisation. The predominant political ideology within the capitalist Labour Party which seeks to promote class harmony through welfare reform, thus obscuring the contradiction. In contrast, the 1965 reforms, summed up their position, "reforms... connected with the demand for one society for services which could be provided by the state, which would manifestly encourage social integration."

## THATCHER'S CHANGE OF ATTACK

For the duration of the post-war boom and into the 1970s the traditional ideology of welfare was the prevailing force of social consensus within the dominant echelons of the bourgeoisie. The advent of monetarist "Thatcherism" and its programme of reduced public expenditure, privatisation and price stability through control of the money supply, displaced the old conservatism in an effort to respond to the increasing social tensions of the 70s and the growing masses of the unemployed.

Although Britain has one of the lowest welfare spending budgets per head of population in Europe the social security budget is by far the largest in the developed economies, making up 30% of all public expenditure. Topping £40bn, it is larger than defence, health and housing put together. In the decade 1979-89, non-military spending increased from £97bn to £811bn. An estimated 20 million people in Britain are in one way or another dependent on "Means Test". Modelled on the same principles as private insurance schemes, the Beveridge calculations were based on a projected maximum of 8% unemployment rate. The growing army of "irregularly employed" (15% official rate), old age pensioners, those in receipt of child and housing benefits - the very existence of these dispensers of moneys constantly threatens to call the bluff on the bourgeoisie's actuarial fiction.

Thus, although there is no doubt that a section of the ruling class would like to dismantle the Welfare State altogether (As early as 1979 Jim Callaghan, then Chancellor, had said "Conservatives must actively work for the Welfare State to wither away as personal freedom and independence provides takes its toll"), the reality is that Government is doing its best to reduce spending by cutting welfare provision, what we have been seeing is not so much the dismantling of the Welfare State as its restructuring in order to ride the adaptation of social policy to serve the continuing needs of capital. For example, the movement away from "liberal" and

"progressive" methods in education towards a purely vocational training of the labour force for the market and in social security the use of the market to provide welfare services, with an increasing emphasis on maintaining the work ethic.

Of course the present needs of capital dictate the reduction state spending but in the face of a still undefeated and resolute working class, the Tory approach on the welfare front continues to be cautious. Forster's speech in 1981, while not seen as an onslaught of fireworks, Although certain backboard layers have become susceptible to the Tories ideological conditioning (there is a real sense of the concentration of the class remains immune, sceptical if not actively hostile to the utopian carrot of a "property owning democracy"). The deep ingrained in the working class suspicion of the aims of workers that the welfare state, particularly the NHS, represents a protective bulwark against capital's attacks is a formidable obstacle to the Tories' attempt to make a fundamental attack on welfare benefits and services than the piecemeal cuts which have eroded working class living standards since 1979. In addition, the Tories' fears the social consequences of such a move and the latest wave of inner city revolts of the unemployed only increases its fears.

## CONCLUSION

Ruling class ideology of the Welfare State as an historic act of collective altruism disguises both its origins in the class struggle and the pressure on advanced capital to maintain. In contrast to the left wing of the bourgeoisie who masquerade as socialists: the Labour Party and the so-called "Communist Party" that can only be interested in the interests of the proletariat, brought under "democratic" control etc, and in contrast to the various Trotskyist and quasi-Trotskyist groups, in this line, we reiterate that the capitalist state cannot guarantee the welfare of its "citizens". The capitalist state must be smashed, consigned to history's dustbin. A gigantic task but ultimately the only road to a truly universal human welfare.

## BRITAIN

### Fighting for a future

continued from p.1

Hansworth to prevent a 3rd night of rioting in return for the police keeping a low profile in the area.

One former British "community leader" called

himself a "priest for people to rob and

go looting". Gerald Kaufan spoke for the

whole Labour Party when he denounced the events

in Tottenham as an "inevitable result of

racism". He denied these revolts as

the acts of criminals don't tally with crime

figures for the areas before the "tots"

began. Hansworth and its surrounding areas,

for example, has a population of 250,000 but

comparatively low crime figures.

The fact is, the ruling class sees all class struggle as criminal. It outlasted secondary and mass picketing and used the utmost rigour of the law at every opportunity as a weapon against a striking miners 1984/5. The most striking aspect is the more "criminal" is the working class.

Since the police took a hammering at Nottingham and lost control of the streets again, they have been trying to regain their powers.

A new law and order bill is in the pipeline to make "disorderly conduct" a new offence.

The police are to be armed with gas and plastic batons and the use of water cannon has been ruled out. The ruling class wants to stamp out "serious public disorder" quickly

because it knows it has the potential to become something else - a potent threat to the whole system.

And the ruling class isn't just the Tories.

## Platforms



of the C.W.O.

# LIVERPOOL SWP AND LABOUR LEFT

The attack by the Labour Party leadership on the Militants of Liverpool Council is seen by such groups as the SWP as "a systematic attack on 'anyone who stands up for socialist principles within the Labour Party'" (Lindsay German, Socialist Worker).

That is why the Liverpool Militants

are to be standing up for socialist principles says much about both groups.

The Militant-dominated council began in Liverpool an ambitious programme of public spending on such necessary things as housing. But under capitalism, everything must be paid for. The floods of unemployment since the miners' strike show exactly how socialist they are, and more importantly, the impossibility of using elected bodies such as councils or parishes to run the state or sections of the state in the workers' interests. This has become increasingly clear as the council directly attacks the workers.

At first the council tried to make its workers take strike action, "to save jobs", but in reality to save the wages. That is the case if the workers in the council's subordinate are to make its workforce redundant and re-hire it after three months, saving a quarter's pay and after it had been rejected as it was too dangerous to lay off January. The idea of laying its workers off for January, locking them out for only one month instead of three!

In short, Militant and its fellow assassins are "knifing" the council workforce. Moreover, Militant's anti-working class actions are accompanied by anti-socialist theory.

Firstly, they spread the idea that the capitalist crisis is caused by inflation in the working class. Any attempt to do this is doomed to fail, precisely because capitalism's state is organised to defend the capitalists' interests against those of the working class. The term "inflation" appears as the capitalist crisis deepens, because then the administrators of the capitalist state, wherever they are, are forced to cut the living standards of the working class. The costs of the state are paid for out of profits, and the cause of the crisis is the fall in the rate of profit. Socialists stand for the abolition of the state of the capitalist state. Militant rejects this practice. In a word, it is reformist.

Secondly, and more importantly, Militant is state capitalist. It propagates the ideology

that nationalisations represent steps towards socialism, instead of recognising that they are merely formalisation of relations already existing between the capitalist state and industrial and financial concerns. There is no need for the conscious activity of the working class to "overturn capitalism", and Militant's present activity reflects this.

It sees working class activity as being

switched on and off like a tap, and the class' political role is restricted to supporting Militants.

Communists, on the other hand, fight for a politically conscious and active working class. Starting in the here and now, the CIO works to build communist factory groups (see our Factory Group Platform - available from the group address) to provide a link between the class and industrial committees, and areas for mass meetings to organise the class' struggles. These mass meetings, and committees elected by them, prefigure the Soviet State and its delegates to their central bodies. Both have to involve the widest possible sections of the working class in order to be effective in combating the class struggle and increasing working-class consciousness, which is really an aspect of the same thing. And unlike the CIO, the CIO does not remain in the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party to both of the same; they constitute an arena for class struggle as well as being a weapon in the struggle for socialism. In the political fight within them their effectiveness in the class struggle will be impaired.

In the case of the Soviets, they will be unable to fulfil their rôle as the vanguard of the proletarian state, as the example of the German soviets shows.

## MILITANT AND THE SWP

Militant's reformism and state capitalist policies are following questions. Why does the Socialist Workers Party, which claims to reject reformism ("The present system cannot be patched up or reformed ... It has to be overthrown"), where Stand column inside the Socialist Workers Party, want to distinguish between state capitalism and socialism? [Russia, China and Eastern Europe are not socialist but capitalist!], want to form a joint organisation with Militant?

An answer can be found in the SWP's Central Committee's letter to its members. Replying to the rhetorical question, "Are we serious about wanting a joint organization?", the

SWP's CC says "We are serious about wanting such an organisation because of the needs of the working class struggle demand that as many socialists as possible come together under to Kinnock, and the best way to ensure this would be a united organisation. Were this to exist, it would not only combine the existing members of Militant and the SWP, but could also provide a fighting pole of attraction to many other socialists(1) ...So the call for unity is made just as if by that is meant a single communist tradition, an emphasis that socialists could 'knock under to kiss'". What is striking about this is the absence of any specific political policy that would the joint organisation combine the existing politics of Militant and the SWP? The rest of the letter does not answer this question. In answer to "Members of the Left will ask what its policies [our emphasis] would be, and so on, what would they be?", we read "It would be absurd (!) to go into long arguments about an organisation which the Militant leadership are opposed to forming". This is the crux of the matter. As far as the capitalist organisation can only lead to the conclusion that the SWP's opposition to reformism is actually applying bolts down to "just a nameless", the effect of which is to draw potential socialists into reformist campaigns for state capitalism.

## "SOCIALIST" REDUNDANCIES

As we go to press the manoeuvring amongst Labour Party factions continues. What is certain is that all factions have nothing to offer but continued attacks on working class living standards. With job cuts, higher rents and rates with Kinnock are all Labour has to offer. The working class in Liverpool and elsewhere are attacking the extent that they see through the "militant" of the council and overcome the divisions between council workers and workers employed in private industry, in Liverpool and elsewhere. That is, they should stand against the council as well as the government and seek to spread the strike to workers controlled by the different tallals or capitalist agencies, but who are as far from the same capitalism. This is what communists fight for in Liverpool, as elsewhere, not unity with the administrators of the capitalist state.

spontaneous revolts won't in themselves change anything. They must be linked with the struggles of other workers. Some unemployed groups have already shown the way here by joining picket lines during the Liverpool strike. This need to be repeated everywhere, especially in situations where the bosses are trying to turn out placards directly from the dole queues as they did in the British Rail guards' strike in the summer.

But this is not the only area of activity. Unemployed workers don't have money but they do have time. As we stated in a recent leaflet: "We can use this time to form Unemployed Workers Groups which can become centres of debate and education about the capitalist crisis and the revolutionary alternative."

In the immediate term such groups can organise spontaneous strikes to demand to be paid, sole and benefit payments by for example, mass occupations of Social Security offices, and then to organise support for victims of victimisation. Such groups are essential to break the isolation and feeling of powerlessness which many on the dole face. But this activity won't be really meaningful unless it partakes in wider political education and a movement to form an international workers' party which will give to all workers, employed and unemployed, a programme for the future.

It also includes Her Majesty's Opposition - Labour. The Labour Party and the trade unions are still scattered out among the class as the Tories and police. When Herring's leader - Bernie Grant said that the police had received a "bloody good hiding" he was immediately denounced by Kinnock and Paisley, he quickly took his words back since the last a budding MP like him wanted was a conflict with Kinnock. A resolution by the Council's Labour Group was passed with Grant's full approval, condemning the violence.

Mr Grant's initial anti-police sentiments has however merged with the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE). They called their members out (without a ballot) on a 1 day strike and demonstration. The National & Local Government Officers Association urged members to vote for resolution "unreservedly condemning the violence".

The capitalists are clearly preparing themselves for future battles with the unemployed. We also need to be prepared. Unemployed youths learned a lot about tactics in street warfare. They were able to use their knowledge of their surroundings, of police tactics and use petrol stations as a source of fuel for bombs. But in the end, the ruling class has to be attacked politically.

Unlike the revolts of the last few weeks, this isn't a short-term response but it is a surer road to future success. Looting and

# 1945 : A NEW IMPERIALISM

## PART ONE

## THE RISE AND FALL

As Gorbachov and Reagan prepare to meet next month to arbitrate on the fate of the world political hacks whose job it is to whip up our enthusiasm for gatherings of the great and terrible, we mustn't forget that the failure of the "peaceful co-existence" and detente eras they know that what has driven the superpowers to the negotiating table is the same as that which in the previous discussions this meeting does not even pretend to be about preserving peace, it is more about how to preserve capitalist rule, with the USA being seen as the need to reduce arms expenditure which is crippling their economies (the USSR badly needs investment in agriculture, the USA has a budget deficit) has been a powerful incentive to talk.

The fortieth anniversary of imperialism dividing the world of the post-war era is divided into two parts which analyses the nature of imperialist domination either side of the Iron Curtain, showing how the forces of the establishment have tried to create an uneasy peace which is neither immutable nor everlasting. In this first part we look at how Western hopes of abolishing capitalist crises and war by creating a new world economy have collapsed.

### THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

Four years ago, on 27th December 1945, representatives from 44 countries recommended a single currency in Washington to mark the formal establishment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The existence of these now-familiar international economic institutions was the result of the 1944 agreement at Bretton Woods between the US and her allies, principally Britain, to eliminate war Keynes and other like-minded economists' attempts to end the preceding capitalist war. Bretton Woods was to inaugurate a new international economic order: an era of stable and peaceful capitalist development based on the principles of John Maynard Keynes, "the last Hotchkiss of a Rolls-Royce car". With this vision of a golden future came the Bretton Woods' warning of "Never again" war against world share, mass unemployment. "Never again would international trade be restricted by protectionist, "beggar-my-neighbour" policies on the part of traditional states, but again" would the world economy (at least in the Western-dominated part) be allowed to slide into a recession of 1929 proportions. Inated an international currency, the "Bretton Woods" currencies would be established. When any particular government found itself with a "balance of payments problem" (i.e., unable to pay for imports) it would be able to draw on the currency required from the fund. All currencies would be fully convertible with each other in order to avoid the erratic exchange rates of the interwar years created by attempts to maintain preferential trading areas. In Keynes' original vision the IMF was to create its own currency to ease the flow of international trade and avoid any national currency gaining the power of a world currency.

From the outset the glossy ideals of Bretton Woods were in marked contrast to reality. In December 1945 that reality was a world ruined and devastated by war, with the USA having emerged as the strongest imperialist. By the end of the war the USA controlled 70% of the world's financial assets; more than half the world's total produced goods and that of all the world's goods were produced in the USA. During the war total merchant shipping tonnage had increased and by 1945 the US owned 70% of it (compared with 10% in 1939). In one year total exports came from the US which itself only imported one tenth of global imports. From this situation it was inevitable that the dollar would

become the universal currency in which all international trade was done.

The first post-war economic crisis sprang from the inability of states bankrupted by war to pay for goods from the USA - the main source of supply. Economists euphemistically called this the "dollar shortage". In this "dollar shortage" the USA had the "gold standard" of the "Cold War". Whilst the USSR was looting East Germany, Austria and Manchuria to restore its war-tattered economy the USA was faced with the prospect that its share of the spoils was so devastated by war that it would not only fail to supply the massive US war-time productive capacity needed but could not compete. Bitter class struggle raged throughout Western Europe and Japan in the immediate aftermath of the war. In Western Europe there were strikes, riots, the French pro-Russian, so-called Communist Parties if Italy, Greece and France went the way of Eastern Europe there were even more markets would disappear and instead of states of non-convertible currencies, Marshall Aid was thus not the product of philanthropic desire as US propaganda at the time made it. It was a long-term need of the economy itself. This affected the subsequent history of the USA and Europe more than any other factor and explains its military commitment to that area today.

As far as Britain was concerned the process of its replacement as the leading imperialist power was further accelerated by the war. In the early war years, for instance, the USA regarded Britain as the major investor in Argentina and raised its ownership of British-owned companies to 50% annually. During the war the British balance of payments deficit was left in abeyance while the debts were piled up. After the war, before the signing of the Bretton Woods agreement, a further Anglo-American Loan was agreed and added to Britain's existing debts to the USA.

When the IMF was formed it was thus far from a society of equals helping to tide one another over through periods of trade imbalance. From the start it was controlled by the US while its other members were obliged to go cap in hand for dollars in order to survive. (After just one year it had lent \$5 billion.) The West European states were in much the same position vis-a-vis the US as some of the "least developed nations" today: they not only had to conform but also borrow but at the same time the frantic attempt to earn dollars via exports (to pay for much-needed "reconstruction" goods as well as to pay back loans and build further debts) was aimed at the ruling classes and the local working class. In Britain, for example, rationing increased after the war (e.g. bread was rationed for the first time), while despite the Labour Government's plan to reduce working hours, the 48 hour week remained in force. And just as today, US loans were made available for humanitarian reasons. They came with conditions, political strings attached. In the case of Britain those strings always involved further steps towards wiping out any preferential trade with the colonies and the rest of the world in these areas through convertible currency agreements.

As our comrades of the Internationalist Party [PdInt] in Italy wrote at the time: "The Bretton Woods system is the purest of internationalisation of colonial and semi-colonial countries, many of which moreover are being pushed into the economic orbit of the USA, thus putting Britain even more in debt to the USA. It has forced Britain to give up its old policy of autonomy, such as the recent huge loan agreed with Wall Street which served exclusively to blackmail the British into removing their system of Imperial preference. Under this system the USA now allows the members of the former to spend their dollars and pounds when they think best rather than being blocked by London."

[Promoted Year 1 # August 1960: p.76]

As the strongest imperialist power, worldwide free trade was in the interests of the US and went in parallel with its hypocritical championing of "the end of Empire" and colonialism. In 1945, at the opening of the old European empires to monopoly capitalism. And just as today US political and strategic interests influence its economic policy, so too did they. They were the impetus to the setting up of Marshall Aid and the "European Recovery Programme" (1948-52).

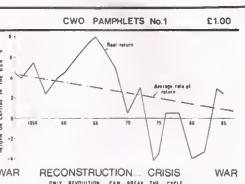
By April 1946 the IMF had all but run out of money but it dismayed at the economic weakness of Europe, the demands rising class struggle and the growing strength of local pro-Russian parties prompted Truman to ask for immediate \$400 million "aid for Europe and Turkey" and Congress to pass the "Point Four Assistance Act" in the same month. Naturally the ERP was accompanied by measures to extend "free" trade currency convertibility. The IMF started from the premise the US wanted to eliminate imperial preference and work for full convertibility of West European currencies against the dollar.

### THE POST-WAR ROOM AND THE HIGH SUMMER OF BRETON WOODS

By 1948-50 production in the economies of Western Europe had gone beyond that of 1939. Capital's accumulation cycle was once more underway. For the world economy 1955-64 was the fastest period of economic growth in history.

With the outbreak of the Korean War the US extended its aid policy beyond Europe and sought to extend it to countries in strategic positions. Thus, the ERP gave way to the Mutual Security Programme which, between 1951 and 1955, helped to stabilise Middle East and Far East countries flanking Russia or China. As one bourgeois economist explained:

"The determination that after 1952 the United States should withdraw from the aid field was abandoned for fear that the administration that American political and military alliances would have to be committed by liberal applications of dollars so that uncommitted countries would have to accept this and they would succumb to Soviet blandishments." [U.N. Scowcroft, *The International Economy Since 1945*]



### THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS OF CAPITALIST DECADENCE

&

### MONEY, CREDIT AND CRISIS

COMMUNIST WORKERS ORGANISATION

# ALIST WORLD ORDER

## THE FALL OF BRETON WOODS

Between 1945 and 1960 over sixty ex-colonial countries achieved formal independence. The cost of US military and financial "wooing" of these and its established allies led to a US balance of payments deficit by the end of the forties. This deficit had been growing ever since. In 1960, however, profit rates were still expanding and the US deficit was not seen as a problem but rather as helping to overcome "the dollar shortage" in Europe.

The recovery of Europe and the opening up of the "developing" countries, together with foreign capital allowing western firms in general to expand their capital base and reap extra-profits from areas with lower organic composition (i.e., more labour intensive areas) which were labour plentiful. By 1970 direct foreign investment by firms in the leading countries of the Western bloc accounted for 75% of total capital exports. US investors invested for about 60% of the total today, with just over a quarter invested in the "developing" areas. The growth of the "peripheries" in the post-war cycle is testimony to the enormous growth in the organic composition of capital and the underlying reason for the decline in profit rates which must eventually accompany such growth.

In the 50's and early 60's however, the rate of profit was still increasing while imperialists looked to the developing world as a source of further capital accumulation. By 1959 the Bretton Woods' aim of full currency convertibility was reached. The US dollar was now the standard unit of account against which the value of all other goods was measured. The exchange rate of each currency was fixed in relation to the dollar (and the gold standard). The value of the dollar itself was fixed against gold (35¢ per ounce). The financial mechanisms envisaged at Bretton Woods could not come into play over. Although the IMF could lend to the metropolitan states (e.g. Britain 1962, 64, 68 and the US itself in 1964) the greater part of its activity was directed to the "under-developed" states. Since the World Bank offered loans for long-term infrastructure projects the IMF's role was to provide short-term finance to ease balance of payments deficits. The condition attached to loans from both these other similar agencies ensured that they operated firmly to the advantage of western imperialism. For example, for International Development (IDB) loans are tied to purchases of goods in the US. The conditions attached to the World Bank's loans were that the Fund's invariable solution to balance of payments problems was (and is) to demand a reduction in domestic demand (i.e. in the consumption of the working population) and devaluation of local currencies (thus reducing the cost of living via higher prices for imported goods).

Also, IMF agreements always conclude with the stipulation that the government in question must not interfere in exchange or import controls. Unlike old-style European colonialism, US imperialism's domination under the banner of "free trade" means that the "rest" world does not have the ability to develop their industries behind the closed doors of tariffs, and in fact the carving up of the world economy between the two imperialist blocs meant that at the height of the post-war boom there was no possibility of an "under-developed" state escaping imperialist domination. On the contrary, during the late 1950's and 60's the greatest rate of growth in the heartlands of imperialism - the relative position of the "newly industrialised countries" worsened. By 1960 two-thirds were trading in the hands of metropolitan countries; the cost of servicing debts for the peripheral states rose by 17% in 1957-60 while the gap between the net export income of these states and the net imports widened dramatically. But while bourgeois economists refused to contemplate the possibility of future crisis for the world economy and instead discussed the elements necessary for "under-developed" states

to reach take-off point for full industrialisation, the seeds of future crisis were already sprouting.

Throughout the Sixties the US balance of payments deficit grew and with it the US experienced a drain on its gold reserves. By the end of the Sixties the rising cost of oil (Hirsch) far exceeded that the cost of US capital and military alliance could not be met by her current account surplus - in other words there was not enough surplus to provide for the demands of US imperialism. The growing deficit of surplus value was reflected in the fortunes of the IMF and its constant search to improve "international liquidity". In 1964 the General Agreement on Trade in Goods (GATT) enabled the IMF to borrow from banks the currencies of its ten strongest members. In effect this need spreading the burden of financing the US imports among its strongest members followed the boom and from which there is no escape for imperialism without another world war. That initial currency convertibility provided by Bretton Woods was the first element of international economic stability. It lasted little more than ten years (1959-71). Much less a means of averting economic crisis, one of the main causes of present crisis has proved to be possible only in periods of rapid growth. But what of other Bretton Woods ideals and institutions?

But the era of apparent stability has gone. 1971 marked a watershed in post-war history. Not only did it end the Cold War as first and second world wars tried to do, it ended the West's accumulation problems by going behind the Iron Curtain, but it also brought havoc for the international currency system. The Bretton Woods system was replaced in fact the financial consequence of a deeper crisis, characteristic of the falling rate of profit and subsequent lack of a sufficient mass of surplus value to sustainably follow the boom and from which there is no escape for imperialism without another world war. That initial currency convertibility provided by Bretton Woods was the first element of international economic stability. It lasted little more than ten years (1959-71). Much less a means of averting economic crisis, one of the main causes of present crisis has proved to be possible only in periods of rapid growth. But what of other Bretton Woods ideals and institutions?

The IMF, in the face of the unimaginable amount of "old world" debts (\$800 billion last year), the resources of the IMF are still the first line of defence, unequal to the task of bailing out bankrupt states. Increasing members' quotas, creating more SDRs are not enough. This year, for the first time, the IMF will be lending to members by 30m SDRs. But 1985 is not 1968 when the US stepped in with Marshall Aid to Europe. The creation of new capital value from the strongest economies is held in check. This doesn't work when the strongest state is the world's biggest debtor (\$130 billion last year), a creditor the IMF is notorious for freezing bank accounts which only worsen the lot of the local populations. During the Seventies the IMF took a back-seat as most governments sought to avoid the strict terms of loan, borrowing from private banks (of generally "recycled" OPEC oil surpluses). But the debts still piled up and make themselves faced collapse. Most states are reluctant to look towards the World Bank or IMF, so once again the IMF tries to do the impossible: impose currency controls and austerity measures which will allow them to continue to bail the crisis to "balance their books" without hurting the interests of US imperialism. As one writer for *Marxist Review* put it:

"The USA is one debtor which the Fed seems powerless to influence; hence the IMF is increasingly seen ... not as an adjustment agency, but as a debt collector for Western and predominantly American creditors."

Today's IMF loan conditions are even more fierce, often involving removal of state subsidies on staple foodstuffs. For countries like Egypt, Tunisia and in Latin America the Eighties have become the decade of IMF Financialisation.

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# **DECEMBER 1905 A WORKERS RISING IN RUSSIA**

The events of the 1905 Revolution in Russia are rightly noted for one of the most significant products of that revolution in Petrograd - the formation of the St. Petersburg Soviet (or workers council). Formed as a result of the need to coordinate the workers forces in that city, it was initially intended to represent 200,000 of the half million workers in the city. In all it lasted fifty days and was succeeded by other Russian cities, most notably in Moscow. Here the Soviets of Workers Deputies represented 100,000 workers. Like all the other Soviets it was a directly elected body of workers whose members were delegated to it, were also instantly recallable by the workers who elected them. This enormous political advance however was not to be the only gain to emerge from the experience of 1905.



LESSONS OF THE MOSCOW UPRISING

The proletariat sensed sooner than its leaders the change in the objective condition of the struggle and the need for a transition from the strike to revolution. This was the case practice march of March 8, 1917. As strikes and demonstrations immediately ceased to satisfy the questions they asked: What is to be done next? And the answer was given by the Bolshevik leaders of the Social-Democratic party who were like a commander-in-chief who had deployed his troops in such a way that most of them took no part in the battle. The Bolsheviks (including Lenin), Lenin recognized that the military actions of the proletariat must be at least partially suspended. He called the functions of the Comintern: "The main functions not only be to form small detachments but propaganda as widely as possible" a broad front, a simple plan. In this he carried out by all means possible. In this he carried the needs for local reality, telling his supporters "do not wait for me and condemning the 'smile fear of five'."

but also advocated the winning over of the masses not simply by the passive way the Mensheviks had done it. He argued that the struggle to denature the idea into fraternalism was a physical one because both sides armed struggle and mass battles. However, he also argued that the two sides showed the different directions which were already taken by the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. He said that the Mensheviks were already taking the road to the right wing of the October 1905 movement itself. Although the Moscow Mensheviks had supported the call for the revolution in 1905 after the events they had accepted the Mensheviks' argument that the Soviet "should not have taken to the offensive" and that the Mensheviks were not prepared and in no position to take the offensive enough. For Plekhanov and the Mensheviks the strike was in themselves political strikes while the Bolsheviks believed that the strike was the first stage on the road to direct confrontation with the state. Ultimately he argued that we would be deceiving both ourselves and the people if we did not take into account the Mensheviks' argument that the Mensheviks' blunder was of assimilation, as the Mensheviks were the result of the counter-revolutionary forces. The Mensheviks' blunder was to believe that the coming revolutionary action will be a non ruling class in history has yet to stand up without a struggle the lessons of Moscow 1905 remain equally relevant.

than to obstruct the struggle against capitalist exploitation. The workers' movement must struggle rather than wait against it. Because unions exist to negotiate the price of labour and are bound up with the control of state power, they are not neutral. Today not even defend the immediate interests of the working class. In the mining, steel and industries directly controlled by the state, the workers' movement has become the agent of the capitalist state. Unions are still for a large share of crews, it is now taken for granted that the capitalist state is also beginning to affect workers in the bloc. Nikitin and Plehanov each wanted a union, but found that to value one as a means of struggle was to give it a political character. But free trade unions were shown to be a new form of organization for the Polish state when Polish employers used them as a form of strike and their activities via country-wide committees they posed a real threat to the capitalist system. The movement for a socialist platform in Poland never lost its impetus by Solidarnosc has not only given the Polish chance to change, but has become another example of capitalist behaviour in the name of socialism. The socialist state in Poland. The lesson is the same East and West. The massive attacks of the capitalist system in crisis cannot be fought at the level of the individual capitalist. It can only be fought at the level of the state, but, as John Coughlin found in practice there

such thing as "trades union power" any more were very struggle assumes a political aspect. It is Marx said over a hundred years ago. We now have the trades union motto "A fair day's pay for a day's work" with the communist slogan "Abolition wages system". This can only come about if those in Cunningham who can to recognise the anti-class nature of the USSR also recognise the interests the so-called present-day Labour has in capitalism and joins us in the fight international party of the working class.

When the Tzarist state moved against the Soviet in St Petersburg (on Dec. 3rd) the Moscow works refused to be cowed by the appearance of Imperial troops and went on strike. A strike in St Petersburg at the same time soon collapsed because "this time it was not a matter of the administrative or of a local strike" (Trotsky). The Moscow workers however took up the challenge. Not least among the reasons for the greater courage of the Moscow workers than at this time was the fact that, unlike Petersburg, they supported the Bolsheviks. December 1905, more than any other event was to demonstrate the essential character of the revolution in Russia as well as the revolutionary temper of Bolshevism.

Whilst all other European Social Democratic Parties considered insurrection to be only an ultimate threat to be shaken at the bourgeoisie, the Bolsheviks owed their very existence to the insistence on the absolute need for armed overthrow of the bourgeois state. In 1902 when Lenin existed Lenin had written of the need for "the political vanguard to arm itself and to "develop the ability to select the proper moment for revolution". The slogan "Down with Bloody Sunday" (the shooting of hundreds of peaceful demonstrators in January, 1905) reached Lenin he began to study the military writings of Marx and Engels, and in 1905 he wrote "The Party Constitution" and Engels. Soon he was flooding his comrades with advice on the arming of the class and the formation of armed detachments. Whilst a Bolshevik Hay Day leaflet of the time called for workers to "fear fighting modern artillerists and the proletariat was born.

The Bolsheviks were tactless, they brought themselves into an urban guerrilla war in which small detachments of 2 or 3 druzhinkas sniped at the troops (aiming always at the officers) and the militia who fought them. The districts of Petrograd and Moscow kept 15,000 troops at bay for over a week. During this time the attempts by workers to fraternise with the troops were on the point of success. However, the Bolsheviks (including Lenin) refused to fire on demonstrators and Dubashov the commander telephoned Petersberg that the three hundred of his men were unreliable. However, the slow start to the revolution forced the Russian Government to send in fresh loyal troops to reconquer the city. By the 19th the Moscow Soviet was forced to call off the struggle which had only been suppressed in Kharkov. A thousand workers had died.

and the Hora. They took the initiative to save alive some workers enough only at the front. Eighty see what occur will yield of the today.

Review KLEBANOV AND NIKITIN

A miner himself, John Cunningham wrote this pamphlet for two reasons. The first was because in "cases of persecution ... an internationally known scientist or writer has more chance of getting his or her case publicised ... than does a street cleaner or a miner.

The story of the heroism of Kelsanov and Nikitin is a depressing one, but it needs to be told. Both the miners who tried to improve working conditions in "Sogd" Russia, Kelsanov has been working since 1959 but nothing has changed for him since 1982 whilst Nikitin died in 1989 as a result of the barathic treatment he received in psychiatric hospitals over a decade and a half of struggle. The booklet is valuable for the picture it gives of the vast array of techniques at the disposal of the state to instil labour discipline (e.g., denying them housing as well as jobs) which underlines the heroism of the struggles of Kelsanov and Nikitin, and other workers like them.

But John Cunningham's booklet is also a response to the experience he had in campaigning for the two men in Britain. He not only discovered that "the TUC simply accepted the Soviet version of events," (i.e. that the two men were indeed mad) but found that the officials of his own union denied him his belief (by implication) an agent of US imperialism. Arthur Scargill wrote to him that he did not show any concern "about the tragedy in El Salvador and Nicaragua where more people are dying in a day than have been killed in the Soviet Union in

Cunningham puts all this political dishonesty down to "sheer bungling" on the one hand and to "the legacy of Stalinism still clinging to the Labour Movement" on the other. From his booklet (half of which is his correspondence with leading Labourites) we get the impression that many in the so-called Labour Left were prepared to accept the same treatment as Nikitin and Kleshev. He poignantly puts into the words the fear of isolation felt by workers when faced with the smear tactics of Scargill et al.  
...

quads, get what weapons you can", Lenin was soon announcing that the lack of concrete preparation "terrified" him.

that had been in October, but when the first news of the war came on December 8 only a few workers had been armed. At first the Soviet ordered the building of the traditional barricades but like bourgeois revolutionaries they were afraid of the masses of the class war rather than that of 1905. Barricades simply provided targets for German artillery and the proletariat was forced to fight on the streets. The situation changed when an urban guerrilla war in which small detachments of 2 or 3 grusinshchiki sniped at the troops (almost always at the officers) began. This was the beginning of the local districts of resistance. In this way 800 armed socialists kept 3,000 troops at bay for over a week. During this time the armed workers of Tiflis and surrounding districts were on the front of many regiments (including the Cossacks) refused to fire on demonstrators and Dabosav, their leader, was killed. It was clear that the men were unreliable. However the slow start to the railwaymen's strike allowed the Germans to move in and capture Tiflis and to conquer the city. By the 19th the Moscow Soviet was forced to call off the struggle which had only been schooled in Kharkov. A thousand workers had died.

**AND NIKTIN**  
"Many people, quite rightly, do not want to be identified, or even risk identification, with the likes of Reagan and Thatcher, so they do not raise the question of repression in the USSR..."

RUSSIA IS CAPITALIST

Urgant's dilemma is not strange to communists. To argue in the present situation for a genuinely socialist programme implies either free trade with capitalist countries or else a return to state socialism. But as he says the working class can only be armed in the struggle for socialism if it recognises that, despite the workers' councils of 1917, Russia and its workers have been betrayed. In other words where he is going to stop is that *Skorilly* or any other trades union leader can no longer conceive of socialism than one where the workers are not only the managers of their own production but also the owners of the means of production, as a "society of freely-associates producer" run by the workers themselves. Russia is still a society of managers and administrators of state. This is also what Gorbachev means when he says that Russia is not yet communist but cannot say what it is.

In his pamphlet does Comingshaw like to believe that where he also determines the production and distribution of social products, the workers are not yet "fully" communist? What *Klitschow* faced was not just "oppression" like the other dissidents of the Sakharov but the ultimate capitalist exploitation of exploitation in its crudest form.

THE TROTSKYISTS ARE GOING TO CONTINUE STRIKE

"FREE" TRADE UNIONS OR POLITICAL STRUGGLE

an other error regards trades unions. Waller correctly states that the Socialists' error was to believe that the "unity of labour" does not recognise that the fact its obvious sides the union are on but where the problem is more complicated. Unions were created by workers in the last century to defend their economic interests. However we must remember that unions have nothing left to offer the working class in terms lasting reforms and thus the unions have no role to

advocated the winning over of the state not simply in the physical way that Lenin had done, but in the spiritual. He said that the struggle to demoralize the state was a physical one but involved with the armed struggle and mass strikes. The armed struggle would move the different directions which Lenin and Mensheviks were already taking in the fundamental nature of the 1905 revolution. Lenin, although he had supported the call for the strike in 1905 after the events they had seen in the streets, had also argued that the Soviet "should not have taken to the streets" if it had been able to. In his report he views that the only misjudgments made were not being well informed enough. For Plekhanov and the Mensheviks "victories" were in themselves but for Lenin they were not. He argued that the revolution would be decisive both for himself and the people with the state. Ultimately he argued

"we concealed from the masses the necessity of a  
separate, bloody war of extirpation, as the  
immediate task of the coming revolutionary action."  
Years later it may be difficult to fore-  
see the "coming revolutionary action" will  
be as no ruling class in history has yet  
gained power without a struggle the lessons  
of the Russian Revolution remain equally relevant

that to obstruct a struggle against capitalism by keeping the workers from participating in it, rather than using it. Because unions exist to negotiate the price or rates you are bound up with the continued existence of the capitalist system. Today even defend the immediate interests of the recent events in the mining, steel and railways dramatically show that is what is important to the unions in this society of the capitalist state. Unions are still a bigger share of profits than it is now. The miners strike in the coal fields of Nekhtin and Kleibach even wanted a wage increase but found that to make such a demand was to threaten their jobs. But free trade unions as a demand in the August 1980 was shown to be a new form for the Polish strike. The Welsh miners strike was a struggle for example and their activities via country-wide strikes were a real threat to the state but once Solidarnosc had been beaten they lost their strength. Solidarnosc has not given only the Polish working class a chance to renew its strength to renew its strength but has become another symbol of the struggle for socialism in Poland. The lesson is one East and West. The massive attacks on miners in coal cannot be fought at an economic level. It must be fought at a political level, as John Ciampi found in practice there

thing as "trades union rated" any more struggle assumes a political aspect. It is ex said over a hundred years ago. We now have the trades union motto "A fair day pay for work" with the communist slogan "Abolition of classes". This can only come about if those Cunningham who care to recognise the anti-capitalist nature of the USA also recognise the errors the so-called present-day Labour as in capitalism and joins us in the fight international party of the working class.

## CWO AGM REPORT

BRETON WOODS continued from p.5

"bunker" riots. Some countries, like Vietnam and Guyana have been declared ineligible to use the Fund's general resources. So much for the IMF as an agent of "international equilibrium".

The World Bank: the sister of the IMF. In the face of mounting difficulties by debtor states, the conditions of US imperialism is now turning to the World Bank - which lends out for longer term projects and whose loan terms involve less immediate repayment than the IMF. The new emphasis on the World Bank shows that Western imperialism now recognises that the IMF conditions are impossible to fulfil. It however, the World Bank will still encourage private banks to lend to what it now regards as a long-term problem. But for countries already crippled by interest rates, more loans are simply like throwing water on a drowning man.

Free Trade and an End to Protectionism. While the spectre of 1930's Trade Wars Impels the leading members of the Western bloc to curb their national instinct to impose tariff barriers and taxes like the recent move by Congress's protectionist moves to offset the loss of US export markets), the GATT [General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs] is seen as the way forward. And it is this that is "itch man's club". In terms of the relationship between the imperialist heartlands and the peripheral states, there are two main types of protectionism. Throughout

the whole post-war period the metropolitan countries have never allowed free entry of food or the majority of manufactured goods from the colonies. The extent to which GATT operates as a tool of imperialism was revealed in this year's UNCTAD [United Nations Committee on Trade and Development] Report which showed that one-third of the exports of "poor countries" are subjected to protection. If protectionism were abandoned by the metropoles, it would be replaced by a new and important manufactured goods would increase their earnings by as much as 5% of the world's gross product. Billions of people, but also imperialism, will be able to reduce the debt burden. The Bretton Woods pretence of free trade is in fact a cynical weapon of imperialism.

The Ideal of Full Employment to which all Bretton Woods signatories are committed. Never happened to this. With 20 million people unemployed in Western Europe alone the Bretton Woods ideal is seen to be nothing but a myth.

Prosperity and Economic Development. The formal political independence which came with the end of colonialism has not led the former colonies to escape the thrall of imperialism. The per capita income of the populations of these countries continues to decline (for the Swedes living standards from 1940 to the World's standards are now counted in millions). The sight of a pop singer dashes out "aid" to starving Africans is a far cry from Keynes' classic vision of prosperity with a smile but it is much more symbolic of the reality of the post-war "development".

But in the imperialist heartlands too prosperity is a thing of the past. Since the beginning of the Sixties living standards in Europe and even in the US have been falling. Today capital flight, financial markets openly fear the recession (it cannot be denied). Ten years ago they said it was impossible. At Bretton Woods they said "Never again".

World War. Keynes was right to see economic crisis as the cause of war. What is and others at Bretton Woods concluded was unacceptable. They created financial mechanisms which will overcome something which is endemic to the system: periodic crisis leading, in our epoch, to global war.

[to be continued]

\* An analysis of the USSR's role in Eastern Europe will appear in the second half of this article - in W25.

\*\* See also the follow up to this article for the political economy of "austerity".

up W.V. sailors (up 50%), organised public

meetings in many strike areas, and taken physical part in picketing, demonstrations, etc. Though we didn't recruit any miners, our activity during the strike helped to bring closer contacts convinced of the importance of our interventions.

The meeting reaffirmed the general analysis made of the strike by the organisation, viz. that the miners' strike was a necessary for the working class capitalist bloc. Our analysis was that the US "recovery" was based on high budget deficits, which led to high interest rates, and that this reflected the world economic situation of which could continue indefinitely. A grisly counterpart to the chorus of hosannas on the capitalist "recovery" was the fact in Britain that capitalist domination in parts of South America, which gave the lie to the myths of better days ahead. There will be no generalised Italian economic revolution. The real issue is the collapse of capitalism imminent; the pattern for the immediate future is of recessionary slumps, punctuated by increasingly weak mini-booms.

If the economic crisis still has some way to go, the same is true for the class struggle. In parallel with the growth of economic power, the growth of class struggle has continued to rise. The continuing upheaval in the semi-developed peripheral areas, such as India and the Philippines, has been matched by intensification of struggle in the capitalist heartlands, viz., the miners strike in Britain and the mass strike in the locomotive industry and the hitherto quiet of class peace. But the EC's attempt against any euphoria; these movements remain isolated by sectional, national and trade union limitations. The workers in the cities are still fighting on its own real terrain. We are not on the verge of decisive class confrontations, or in a pre-revolutionary situation. This recognition must be made if the strike is to last. Even later 1960s (France, Italy etc.) were not qualitative breaks from the class struggles since 1945, but rather intensifications of those struggles on a quantitative basis.

The discussion on the group's press led to certain important decisions being taken. In keeping with a modest increase in its forces, the CWO now feels it has the capacity to increase the production of its publication, Work News, from its present 6, to 8 or 9 issues per year, from 1986. It was also decided that, while maintaining its national and international slant, the paper would also be an anarchist for the group if it devoted proportionately more space to aspects of the crisis and class struggle in Britain, and this will be the case in the coming issues.

It was also decided that, with the approximation of our positions to those of the International Marxist Current (IMC) and the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party, Communist Renewal, would function as the central organ of the CWO and that, after the forthcoming issue, Revolutionary Perspectives, would be discontinued. The latter had been our theoretical journal for the last three years and had overdrawn development from our origins in the politics of the German Left, to our present identification with those of the IMC. Leftists who have not yet fully fulfilled its purpose and the existence of two theoretical papers was a luxury. To supplement the work of C.R., the organisation intends to continue the IMC's theoretical work, beginning with the appearance of our first, on economics.

A further proposal of the E.C. to change the name of the organisation was defeated, since the members felt that resulting confusion would outweigh any possible advantages in deleting our last, semantic, link with the German Left; our politics were not in our name, but what we published.

The meeting also addressed itself to the production of a balanced sheet on our interventions in the miners strike, the biggest moment in the class struggle in Britain since 1972, and our biggest test as an organisation.

On a practical level, the EC felt the group as a whole failed to turn round for some satisfaction. Our tiny organisation had intervened over the whole strike with a steady stream of leaflets, averaging one a fortnight, stepped

## OPEN MEETINGS

The CWO will be holding a series of open meetings on the theme of:

INNER CITIES: FROM RESISTANCE TO REVOLUTION

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LEEDS Wed. November 20th 8.00pm.  
Trades Club, Sville Mt. Leeds 7.

GLASGOW Wed. November 13th 7.30pm.  
Woodside Halls, 500 Gresham St., G.S.

All welcome.

## PUBLICATIONS

The CWO publishes an annual theoretical review Revolutionary Perspectives. The current issue contains articles on the Italian Left, Trotskyism and the lessons of the Miners Strike, (£1 p.d.). The CWO also produces for the International Bureau for the Revolutionary Communist Review, central organ of the Bureau. The next issue will be mainly concerned with the tasks of communists in the peripheral countries. It will appear in December.

# CLASS STRUGGLE V. THE 'ECONOMIC MIRACLE'

## INTRODUCTION

In the last issue of Workers Voice the article "Else! A State of Dependence" explained the impasse of the Irish economy in its historical context. It exposed the myth of "national independence" which pointed out that Ireland's industrial linkage into the crisis-ridden world economy inevitably led management to impose greater exploitation and austerity on the working class. But the workers' response to this was not a history, and this is charted in the text below, along with the lessons for the proletariat in general, and its' revolutionary minorities in Heaven.

Until recent decades the relatively undeveloped state of the class in Ireland has led to it being viewed as the 'poor relation' in terms of class struggle compared with its more mature counterparts in Britain, and even in Ulster. The history books are dominated by nationalism and only occasionally do socialist historians find a voice and fight on their own class terrain.

However, there were since the early sixties, which has seen industry and the working class develop to an unprecedented degree, has also witnessed conflict which today makes the proletariat in Ireland one of the most strike-prone in Europe. This is not to say however the period also exhibits a whole series of splits within the class which cripple any chance of an effective fight against capitalist attacks.

## UPTHEAT IN THE SIXTIES

This decade of rapid industrialisation and restructuring of the Irish economy saw the class come of age in a series of big disputes with more and more workers becoming directly involved (annual figures show that on average three times as many workers were taking strike action in the sixties, as during the fifties).

## THE STATE RESPONDS TO MILITANCY

Significantly, most of the conflicts occurred in large scale industries and were often connected with state enterprises (e.g.: the 1962 miners' strikes, and the struggles in the Electricity Supply Board). This contrasted with earlier periods where disputes were not only on a smaller scale, but generally had much more localist concerns. The main cause of strikes was wages, but engagement and dismissal of fellow workers provided relatively more strikes in Eire than elsewhere in Europe.

Particularly important was the development at an early stage of a high degree of white collar militancy, shattering the old image of conformism respectively in a series of seemingly isolated strikes. Conflict in the classes simmered throughout the decade and culminated in the

longest banking stoppage in history (six months 1969-70). Previous conservative teachers also found it easier to ignore the condition their living standards exposed the line of their privileged position. In fact, in seven of the fifteen years between 1961 and 1975 more days were lost due to disputes in services than in industry at present.

The aspect of the struggles worth mentioning, because of its lasting significance, was the enormous success of picketing, which characterised many of the major disputes. As one stamped government report put it,

"The devil has no need to tempt the Irish, he has them on the gates of Heaven, and none of them will go in." But unfortunately this basic solidarity was not matched by any tendency towards the generalisation of disputes across sectional divisions, and strikes remained within union frameworks, if not specifically within the control of the leadership. Unlike Britain spontaneous or rank-and-file conflict was not a feature of the Irish scene.

Even more than their British counterparts, Irish unions are both sectorial and localist, providing them with ample opportunity to derail the class struggle with any number of 'democratic' internal disputes. This has been the distinguishing policy of the infamous two-tier picketing policy of the ICTU (the Irish TUC) which distinguishes between the right to 'all out' picket (the latter reserved for contentious alone to sanction). On several occasions since this has been the smokescreen behind which unions have initiated and/or blessed scabbing.

Their counter-revolutionary nature has been compounded by their close association with state economic planning and corporatist bodies, especially since the sixties.

## THE STATE RESPONDS TO MILITANCY

1970 was also a watershed for government policy, initiating a period of increasing debt, as well as the abundance of strikes from it became the offensive. The ideological crusade against 'irreconcilable action' will be familiar to most British workers but the main arm of the states' attack was initially the formation of the National Pay Agreement in that year.

The system, which has demanded 'industrial relations' ever since, provides a tri-partite framework for the adjustment of all working class wages more or less annually, and is binding both unions and bosses. It provides excellent leverage for the employers in each Agreement as a 'negotiating triumph', whilst at the same time tying them to a convenient no-strike pact with workers push for action. Ideologically, the NPA is the last bastion of the guardians of orderliness (sic) in industry against 'troublemakers', who would return the nation to the chaos of the sixties.

This is not to say that the unions do not make allusions to militancy and resistance to austerity. Indeed the continual link with the state has been under stress for some time now, especially since the effects of the recession and debt have hit the Irish economy. With all three main political parties in the country espousing (and carrying on) greater austerity programmes the ICTU have found it necessary to distance themselves from the political superstructure. But the use of leftist phraseology can disguise their role in the above-average line in living standards for industrial workers of over 12% by the start of the eighties, compared to a real increase in the sixties. National unemployment rose from 17.5% to 25% in certain areas the actual figure is as high as 40%.

## THE REAL STRUGGLE

The lull in the class struggle brought about by re-alliances of the unions towards social controls did not stand proved to be only temporary, and from the mid-seventies to the present, statistics have soared. The incidence of unofficial action has of course shot up as the TUC's ruling clique begin to ignore the unions in order to fight the battle of the already deteriorating living standards. Strikes among tanker drivers, power workers, and RTE staff (the Irish BBC)



Like British unions, Irish unions use leftist campaigns to hide their role in capitalist austerity. But it would be over optimistic however, to see any kind of resolution of these conflicts as marking significant breakthroughs in respect of the problems which beset the strikes of the sixties. Firstly, if they are not union initiated actions are not necessarily ones which are quickly controlled by the union at some level. In fact, despite more importantly, but of course inter-related, is that solidarity action and generalisation to other sections of the class in struggle remain rare. In Eire, the central task of propaganda, an effective fightback world-wide is particularly acute. Strike action remains the business of mass organisations, and the mass-based resistance movement, and passive solidarity like picket observance is still the highest expression of class unity.

Thus it is clear that the situation in Eire demands of communists a determined and coherent struggle strategy. And what experience of the last two decades has demonstrated is that to fight effectively Irish workers must organise outside union control. This means electing strike committees of revolutionaries and through these committees uniting the different skirmishes which are taking place, and calling on other workers to join them. As such, the central task of the communists is to build a strike that generalisation and unification are the only way of avoiding union sabotage, is particularly relevant here. And since political independence is essential to preventing workers' struggles being led into dead ends, the communists have the urgent task of creating a communist vanguard in Ireland and winning over the most advanced workers to its' politics.

As a vital part of this, communists must fight for an established presence in the class; revolutionaries here must take the initiative to undermine the reactionary influence of the trade unions and their partners in the Irish 'Labour' and 'Communist' Parties, and offer the class a revolutionary alternative. As we emphasised in Workers Voice no.11:

"Only a strategy of building anti-union groups in the workplace can keep alive the insights learned in one struggle for the next, as a stage in building a communist party with a real life in the working class."

[CWO introduction to the text "Communist Intervention in Italy"]

More generally, the isolation of the Eire workers from their class comrades in Ulster and Britain and the rest of Europe needs to be overcome. By taking a leading role in organising international solidarity between workers of different capitalisms' boundaries, and combatting the divisive policies of the 'left', communists can create the conditions for militant response to the continuing convulsions of the Irish economy, and further exacerbate the tears in the already delicate fabric of Irish society.

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# WORKERS VOICE

COMMUNIST  
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## SOLIDARITY

## NOT LEGALITY!

If proof were needed that the bosses offensive is still alive and well then the sacking of 6000 striking printworkers by Murdoch's News International group is sufficient evidence in itself. The closure of the Mirror printing office after the closure of pits and factories as well as the sacking of workers (most notably the all female printing sumo team of the Mirror workers in February) has proceeded apace. Now Garforth steelworkers in Scotland have closed with hardly a fight. Overall the number of days "lost" in strikes is at its lowest level since the end of the Second World War. Nor is this simply a British picture. The miners strike of 1984 was not cut short by a number of struggles in the capitalist heartlands which involved French and German metalworkers, Norwegian oil workers, Spanish public sector workers and Spanish shipyard workers. Now internationally significant strikes can be seen from the massive decline in major struggles in the capitalist metropolises. This is especially since it is taking place in a major multinational with huge interests in Australia, India, Japan and elsewhere. It is therefore another important test of whether the working class is yet ready to retake the initiative in the global struggle between workers and bosses.

Lets start by disposing of some powerful myths. The last that protects Murdoch is that he allows him to sack printworkers with impunity isn't a "Tory law". It has never been anything else but legal for bosses to sack workers on strike without any form of compensation or process. What the mountain of Tory laws have done is to make it illegal to take solidarity action with them if they are unable to get away with it? Following the Labour Party's failure to get laws to limit classaction to work, the Heath Government of 1970 tried to do what the Tories have done today. But Heath's Industrial Relations Act collapsed in the face of massive demonstrations and strikes by workers to free themselves from imposition of "contempt" of these laws. The present Tory laws have been successful for two concrete reasons. Neither the Labour Party nor the TUC have been able to stop in opposing them but workers still look to these organisations, despite their long and dishonorable histories, to defend them. They have all circled. But workers will wait in vain for these organisations to defend them since they act in the left factions of the capitalists' classes. That is the role which the Labour Party plays for capitalism which is to get workers to postpone their struggle until it is reformed by weighing against the "Tory laws" and promising that Labour will repeal them when con workers into playing the parliamentarian game and into obeying the laws which guarantee the power of the bosses. This legalistic stand is echoed by the TUC whose latest star is the SOTG boss, Steve Rotheram. With the ideological barrage in favour of legality and of the demoralisation created by the enormous material difficulties of threatened redundancy and unemployment, it is not surprising that the one factor which can defeat the Government - is, with a few notable exceptions, absent. That factor is class struggle. The Tory law against "secondary picketing", solidarity action etc. can only work if each struggle remains isolated. It

is in the struggles of other workers. Dean at Fleet St calls it the old school of union sectionalism, the very craft mentality which has done so much to destroy working class unity in the past. By keeping the struggle on the sectional terrain, by keeping it as a mere "trade" dispute the unions are preventing each of these potentially subversive movements from leaving the framework of capitalist control.

A token fight with token sacrifices does not what the unions want as they then have time to negotiate another defeat for the working class. What happens is not simply to break the laws but to build them wide open by mass pickets and more importantly by mass action.

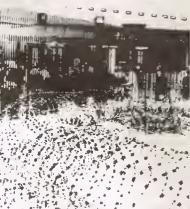
This is why the CIO called a general strike to "extend the struggle to Fleet St and the provinces". Brenda Dean's argument that the workers' international rivals carry on printing will bring Murdoch to his knees commercially is a lie and a diversion. Already the other newspaper publishers are ready to follow Murdoch. The Guardian has issued an ultimatum to its workforce over manning as has the Express whilst Maxwell has sacked Mirror workers who don't work. A strike of the Fleet St. presses (especially those no longer used by Murdoch) would not only bring up un-working class capitalist backs like Wapping, Limehouse, Young of the Guardian but would also allow workers to print a strike paper. This could not only fight the class lies about the printworkers but could also lift the veil of censorship over other struggles which are taking place up and down the country like, for example, that of the Silentnight workers of Balsall Heath who have joined the picket line at Wapping. A mass picket of thousands might close Wapping but if it remains a ritual battle on official terms then it will simply be another Orgreave. "Picketing" which is the slogan of all the leftie groups is, on its own, not enough and risks being a diversion away from the real issue as we noted in the letter.

"The miners lost because the NUM made sure that they were isolated. The same will happen to the printworkers unless the working class takes the initiative."

SELF-ORGANISATION

Obviously the unions that are scurrying to obey the law aren't going to give a lead in this. In the nineteenth century workers paid into union funds in order

Murdoch's barbed wire is not the only obstacle facing the printworkers at Wapping...



# Inner cities

## unrest continues

As the crisis deepens the deliberate and concerted suppression of information by the capitalist press is becoming more blatant by the day. After the riots of 1972 when the speed limit was blamed on the blunders of the Fleet Street hacks have become more talkative about the capitalist law and order by ignoring both British law and order as much as they can. Where events are reported it is usually after they are over (as in the case of the miners) in a way which distorts the significance of what happened. It is equally important for the revolutionary struggle to fight this blackout with the limited means that are available. The situation is particularly acute in terms of international class struggle (the present Indian general strike against price rises has made a singling out of the British workers by the British press). It is also true of Britain. We therefore appeal to comrades and sympathisers to send us short items which are on local issues but which are of general significance for all workers. The example which follows was sent to us by a comrade in Bristol.

"During the week-end of 7-8th February fighting broke out between police and black and white unemployed youth in the St Pauls district of Bristol, scene of the 1972 riots. The reason given by the police was that the unemployed members of the working class in Britain's inner cities is not confined to hot summer nights. An 'uneasy calm' to quote the

### WAPPING

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to prepare for strikes. When they did fight they struggled until the fund was exhausted or victory won. But what happens today? Unions are so integrated into the financial and political system of capitalism that workers can't even get a decent strike because it is all tied up in pension funds for under-bureaucratized leaders, cut out from the miners, the NUM let their funds become state property. The same old arguments about the need to prevent redundancies (for what...) and their responsibility for being trotted out in this fight by Deen and Co. The NGA's Tony Dubbins has already said he's against militant action by printers because "the publicans" encouraged what went on in the miners' strike". Thus to protect union investment both he and Deen hope to stir "the conscience of the nation" to support the miners cause. This is the same line that the US airline workers backed by Reagan in 1981 were told they had to accept. Instead the NGA has disintegrated attempts at blocking by its own members by holding a ballot after telling the workers taking part that their action might well be illegal. Not surprisingly their "no" verdict they wanted. The NGA's sabotage of the struggle is generally more subtle than that. Socialists are calling for more on the picket line at Wapping as a means of avoiding the real need to extend the struggle. The NGA is in effect the linchpin to become the apostles of solidarity amongst workers since they have been instructing their members to cross NUJ picket lines at Portsmouth and Sunderland for months. Thus, if workers are to unite, occupy Fleet Street, write a paper etc it will only come through their own efforts. A strike committee of all workers, irrespective of trade or union distinctions, will have to be formed to coordinate such an enterprise. Such a committee will have to be answerable to the workers in struggle as a whole, not through the capitalist mechanism of the ageing ballot which isolates workers with their individual

local police, exists permanently in St. Pauls and has done for a number of years now. As in other inner city areas (like Toxteth in Liverpool) where the police station is besieged after a night of rioting (in this case numerous minor "disturbances" have been held out in recent months. But they could not cover-up the night after two cars were torched by the police, petrol bombs were thrown and set on surrounding houses, a press photograph was attacked and a fire engine was pelted with stones.

The fighting started when two whites were beaten up by police following a car chase. The police then drove the car onto the pavement, rammed a car being driven by a local man with his child as a passenger, narrowly avoiding seriously injuring them. The police then "rounded up the unemployed" as a crowd of about 100 gathered. A white youth poured gallons of fuel on the police car turning it into a blazing inferno. A local bus was set alight. The police then started because the police started to get heavy and people will just not stand for that any more round here."

With all the eyewitness accounts the local media has had a difficult job painting the revolt as a "racist riot". The Western Daily Press called it "anлав in the heart of the city" and tried to lay the blame on a "minority" but, as it said in Workers Voice 25, this is because "the ruling class sees all class struggle as criminal".

### Philippines

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other supported the Aquino faction or abstained. The class has not asserted its own interests but looks to the new government to alleviate the worst effects of the world capitalist crisis. But a government of national unity will not be able to pay levels of the workers in the interests of defending "the nation". As the crisis深ens it is likely that workers will transfer their support to the bourgeois nationalists under the banner of anti-imperialism. This will lead to useless sacrifices by the workers, useless because they are not fighting for the working class, an alternative imperialism. As we wrote in our Draft Theses on the Tasks of Communists in Capitalism<sup>1</sup> Periphery:

"Proletarian tactics absolutely exclude any sort of alliance, however temporary with any faction of the bourgeoisie. A proletarian policy does not recognise any sort of 'progressive' or anti-imperialist." [Thesis 9 in Communist Review 3]

The way forward for the Filipino working class is not to follow the immediatist struggle to replace one set of imperialist gangsters with another, but to reject all claims for a peace from the ruling class as they try to make the workers pay even more for the capitalists' crisis. By carrying all out in the malnutritioned condition struggle for the widest proletarian interests of higher wages and better living conditions the workers will be able to defend their rights independently of all capitalist factions. But the only permanent guarantee of the growth of that independence is the formation of a Marxist-Leninist party, the vanguard party of the world's workers, the only instrument which can take on capitalism everywhere. Only then will the Filipino proletariat be in a position to fight a genuine anti-imperialist struggle.

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# Philippines / Haiti : imperialism changes the guard

## INTRODUCTION

Communists have often faced ridicule when talking of the leaders of every nation as US or Russian stooges. But even the capitalist press is attempting to hide the fact after the February fall of both "Baby Doc" Duvalier in Haiti and Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines. No doubt the movement of their flights come from the US (in the case of Duvalier before he had even flown) but the aircraft and the CIA transports which spirited them away were placed by the US (giving a new meaning to "American Express"). By allowing them to keep the millions of dollars they had looted during their years of power the US in effect briated and threatened them into leaving. And this orderly transfer has ensured that there is little threat to US interests in either country.

There is also a real change in either country. The Aquino clique is just another faction of the filipino bourgeoisie led by Marcos whilst the Haitian Army is in charge of a Government made up of ex-Duvalierists. Only the hideous Ton-Ton Macoutes have been sacrificed to the anger of the masses.

But why should the US ditch regimes it served its interests loyally for a total of over 50 years? Basically it is because the world economic crisis is raging with greater intensity than the imperialist periphery and the needs of US imperialism. The rôle of the guard from above from which was abolished by a mass movement from below which would let the national bourgeoisie expand and enclose the property of US multinationals. This was the lesson the US learned from supporting both the Iranian Shah and Somoza in Nicaragua until it was too late. Events in the Philippines today therefore foreshadow what will happen in other countries tomorrow.

For the past decade the Philippines has been struck by economic crisis which has led to bitter class struggles, divisions in the ruling class and a burgeoning guerrilla war in the countryside. Since 1983, when Marcos assumed power, the US has supported the bourgeois faction, Benigno Aquino the arriviste and brutality which had sustained Marcos in power for over 20 years was clearly no longer enough. The most important factor however was clear that the Philippine upper classes were deserting Marcos. This Marcos could have survived but the failure of the army in the government was the final straw. It was a sense of its morale but the exhaustion of the USA's patience with their faithful client's corrupt army bosses. Despite the fact that he had been forced by Reagan at the White House he was told to clean up the regime or go.

## COMMUNIST REVIEW

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In October 1985 Marcos was ordered by Washington to hold an early Presidential election. Despite Reagan's kneejerk comments in favour of Marcos, the State Department and the CIA thought Marcos was the only alternative faction of the ruling elite now led by Aquino's widow, Cory. The CIA channelled funds to an anti-Marcos campaign and orchestrated personal attacks on Marcos. The US Congress was suddenly informed that Marcos had embezzled \$350 millions of US aid for projects in the Philippines and the US Army revealed that his supposed heroic war record fighting the Japanese was a complete fraud. In reality the Aquino faction is little different from Marcos. The main issue between them is that Marcos has gone too far in cheating them of the spoils of exploiting the Phillipine masses. Aquino however has been more successful and her Prime Minister Laurel was, until recently a member of Marcos' own party. The Aquino faction stands for the same interests and policies. In particular in its devotion to the US, as Marcos, Benigno Aquino himself once worked for the CIA.

## THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

During the last decade South East Asia has been hit particularly hard by the world economic crisis because of its rich supply of raw materials, cheap labour and plentiful supplies of US and Japanese capital. However the most intense imperialist periphery and the most rapid of trade turned against these countries as the prices of their raw materials have crashed. The Philippines have suffered a gradual decline since 1973. The rate of growth has fallen in the last three years as the prices of its main exports, copper, sugar, copra, and palm oil have both fallen sharply. The Philippines exported for \$100 in 1970 and this has brought in real terms. The value of gross domestic production has fallen 10% in the last two years and 20% in the last five years since 1972. All this has resulted in a foreign debt of \$26.2 billions approximately equal to 100% of GNP, devaluation of the currency and inflation of 25%. Officially unemployment is 15% but in reality it is much higher. Recently the country failed to take part in the international forums and these have since been delayed and rescheduled. It is hardly surprising that the ruling class could no longer afford Marcos.

However it is the industrial working class, which is about 25% of the population which has suffered the most dramatic increases in the cost of living since 1970, which, even by local standards, have been held down. During the period of martial law strikes were illegal since then outbreaks of open struggle have been harshly repressed. The agricultural proletariat and dispossessed peasantry, who make up over 50% of the population, are in even worse shape. It is estimated that there is an unemployment rate of 40% in the countryside. It is this sector which forms the backbone of the guerrilla army. The average income is less than £1 a day below the poverty line. It is of course vital for US imperialism that this state of misery is maintained.

## DEMANDS OF IMPERIALISM

The US multinationals have invested \$2.5 billions in the Philippines, which yield a high rate of profit. As a client of US imperialism the country is obliged to buy US goods and technology. An example of this is the Bates shoe company, originally founded by Westinghouse, for which it hired payment alone now amount to \$350,000 a day. In addition a large part of the country's debt is with US banks. As a result of the terrible financial state in the Philippines economy, the real concern for the US is over its military bases of Clark Field airforce base and Subic Bay naval base in the Philippines outside the USA. They are manned by 18,000 troops, strategically placed opposite the Russian Cam Ranh base in Vietnam and they guard the last major port in Southeast Asia, the West's strategic raw materials pass. Since the US withdrawal from Vietnam these bases have assumed enormous importance for the US.

The commander of the US Seventh Fleet, Rear Admiral Christian recently said:  
"We should pull the Philippines is tantamount to abandoning the South China Sea to the Soviets."

For the US that would mean the abandonment of a domination which they have held since they seized the Philippines from Spain in 1898. After granting independence to the Philippines in 1946 the US continued to hold over the bases through an agreement which expired in 1991. Marcos was replaced by Aquino precisely because the US believed the corruption of Marcos was closely identified with the USA and the USA would give rise to a nationalist movement along Iranian lines of work a Sandinista-type movement which would emerge from the day-to-day guerrilla struggle of the New Peoples Army.

The New Peoples Army (NPA) is the military arm of the Maoist, so-called Communist Party. It represents the ultra-left wing of the Philippines bourgeoisie and looks to state capitalism and the nationalisation of the multinationals as the solution to the problems of the Philippines. Its biggest source of weakness is that China, which used to support it, has recently broken. Most revolutionary parties with some embarrassment since China now seeks an accommodation with US imperialism itself. Neither is the NPA yet able to win the rural areas. They have operated at present with captured weapons and by imposing taxes on the so-called "liberated" areas. Its fighting strength is drawn from the peasantry and the working class, mainly the semi-bourgeoisie. The success which the NPA has achieved so far is an indication of the total incompetence of Marcos' Army commanders like General Pascual and General Velasco. A few days before Marcos fell by the US nominee General Ramos. It was Ramos' decision which seems Marcos' fate. He has been forced to go to the US. The US Army is likely to increase and make it increasingly effective, thus forcing the NPA onto the defensive. Its only hope is to find a client in the US, like the client of Norway and thus the war will be converted into the more orthodox kind of imperialist conflict. Let us look at what has seen in Vietnam, Angola and Rhodesia, and in Central America. As events in Nicaragua also graphically illustrate there can be no lasting and successful struggle for national liberation today. The Philippines can only escape from the vice of US imperialism if another social force ousts the present Marcos regime. The forces of US imperialism are not playing independent role. Any faction which gains power will be forced to carry out the same policies of exploitation which worldwide have created nothing but starvation and war on the periphery of capitalism.

The US has been the dominant force and rests in the hands of the working class both in the Philippines and throughout the world.

## TASKS OF THE WORKING CLASS

In the February elections the working class C. 35% of the vote

## OPEN MEETINGS

ABERDEEN South Africa and the Tasks of Revolutionaries Thursday, April 3rd 7.30 WEA, 163 King Street.

GLASGOW Lessons of the Print Workers Struggle Wednesday March 19th 7.30 Woodside Hall, St George Cross Subway.

MANCHESTER The Present Period and the Tasks of Communists March 1st, 7.30 p.m. Star and Garter (behind Piccadilly Station). [Debate with the ICC]

LEEDS The Present Period and the Tasks of Communists Wednesday May 19th 8.00 Leeds Trades Club Savile Mount Leeds 7

For meetings in LONDON, BRISTOL and BELFAST write to the group address or see local advertising.

# WOMEN AND

## INTRODUCTION

The following article is a contribution from one of our comrades on the question of "female emancipation". It deals only briefly with the main aspects of the issue and is thus necessarily schematic. As the comrade says at the beginning, the article is very interesting by Engels. But it is not his. It is mine. Despite the datedness of Engels' factual basis and the fact that he doesn't discuss the first form of civilisation known to humanity, the so-called "Asiatic mode of production", this article demonstrates clearly the historically conditioned nature of women's liberation in general. The conclusion that the revolution can only come through the liberation of all humanity means an end to class society is the starting point for all marxist analyses. We would however welcome any correspondence which expands the issues raised here.

As marxists we are against all forms of oppression. Oppression of immigrants, women, racial minorities, disabled people etc is all part of the capitalist game of divide and rule. Nearly a century and a half ago, Marx wrote in the Communist Manifesto that "the bourgeoisie has... transformed into a class... continually being upset... by the competition between them". The bosses aim is to cut the coat of workers' tails, to榨取 their labour power. Thus white male workers jealously attempt to guard their exploitation from women and blacks in an attempt to keep wages down and speed up the competition between the workers. This occurs not only across racial or sexual differences but also across trade and sectional barriers. As a result of this the working class scrambles to prevent their class comrades from sharing their crumbs, the capitalist laughing up his sleeve at this competition. This is why workers, sexist or narrow-minded whilst he quietly swallows the profits from the bakery. It is because of this that the working class must be taking over that bakery and creating a society of equality for all that it is not enough for them to simply express solidarity with the oppressed. For marxists it is essential to understand exactly why oppression exists. A marxist analysis is not however simply an attempt to understand the world. The task is both to understand and change the world. For this reason we are forced to take a political position on feminism which, in its myriad forms, is not how most marxist capitalisms see it. The monogamous family existing within civilisation today is no exception to this rule.

### STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Until about 10,000 years ago all human societies were based upon hunting and gathering. The size of the group was limited due to the limited supplies of food, and these groups were forced to move from place to place frequently. During this period there developed a sense of society, i.e. within what nineteenth century anthropology called Savagery there existed two main forms of the family. The first was the Patriarchal Family. According to the research carried out by Morgan, from unregulated sexual relations to marriage groups which arranged according to the needs of the community. All husbands were the husbands and wives of each other, as were their children, children's children etc. So marriage existed with but not between generations. This was the monogamous family called as the necessary preparatory stage for the future development of the family.

### A MARXIST ANALYSIS

A marxist analysis locates the origins of female subordination in the development of surplus wealth as a result of the development of the productive forces of society. This analysis is based on the assumption that, not from the biological differences existing between the sexes, but from the acquisition of private property. Patriarchal ideology of feminist mythology is an ahistorical view. Up until the nineteenth century, historical thinking was very much under the Biblical

anthropologists as "Horticultural Society", or as Engels called it "Lower Barbarism" the plough was introduced and we had arrived at "Higher Barbarism" or Agricultural society proper. This stage of development was marked by the growth of large villages, professional armies, writing and full-time priests. In short it laid the foundations for the later Capitalist. The Higher Barbarism that the Patriarchal Family arose extending further the restrictions on sexual relations between blood relatives. In fact group marriage became increasingly impossible.

"...the evolution of the family in primitive times consists in the progressive narrowing of the circle originally embracing the whole tribe with its various common conjugal tie between the two sexes present. The continuous exclusion, first of nearer then of more remote relatives, and at last even of relatives by marriage, ends by making any such group marriage practically impossible." Engels *The Origin of the Family* p.53

Stages similar to lower and higher Barbarism have been discovered since the expansion of capitalism as a world system. Some feminists who have studied the origins of these societies, jumped to the conclusion that male dominance is a part of "human nature". What they have failed to understand is that today's patriarchal society has, as a result of the degree been integrated into the capitalist system and have thus been influenced by capitalist society's division of labour. A distinction within primitive societies is not to be confused with male domination. The myth of "Man the Hunter" rests on the false idea that hunting is where primitive men gather into social units of children. The result of this, children, many of whom die in infancy is the most important part of labour on which the whole future of the group rests. In most hunter-gatherer societies the evidence suggests that men equalled women, not only but within a distinct division of labour. A classical illustration of the above points can be seen in the social organisation of the Bushmen. The Bushmen's diet only constitutes a third of their diet and the male hunters were only successful once in four days. The women could gather enough food for the group for a day within a few hours. In such a situation it is not surprising that they "make economic practice of the sexes, the poorer status due to the many women in the 'civilised' world." (Richard Leakey *The Making of Mankind* p.105) Within Savagery, Lower Barbarism exploited one section of the population by another. This is not surprising. The total product of the labour of these societies is not sufficient to provide a minority to live by non-productive work. In addition, within the Patriarchal Higher Barbarism, where a surplus product exists that we begin to see the systematic exploitation of one section of society by another. This is civilisation.

Civilisation has contributed to society the forces which to understand and identify the existing division of labour. Civilisation introduced a class, concerned, not with production per se, but only with the exchange of products. For the first time we can see a class which, whilst quite separate from production itself, does nevertheless direct the production process and sublates production. The surplus created by the toiling masses who have been directly involved in the production process ends up being directed and utilised by a parasitic class which has no productive role at all to the production process. The goods (commodities) produced are bought and sold. Money becomes a product as do slave-bondsmen, interest rates etc. Capital itself becomes a commodity to be sold and pledged and not far behind come mortgages. The centralisation of wealth and the concentration of it in the hands of a small parasitic class paralleled by the growing mass of impoverishment is one of civilisations contributions to history.

# COMMUNISM

The advent of trading surpluses saw the need to develop armes for protection of travelling merchants, rulers, etc. These armes involved long journeys which were carried out by men not burdened with children. The armes, used for the express purpose of defending surpluses were also controlled by men, the ruling class. This was paralleled by the introduction of the patriarchal family and the oppression of women. With the narrowing down of the extent of sexual relations between men and women, nothing which was necessary rule in establishing the patriarchal family, was no longer essential. Women were no longer regarded as equal human beings as under Stoicism and Buddhism. The essential feature of the patriarchal family is its sexual power. With patriarchy we see for the first time the incorporation of unfree persons into the family unit. The very word 'family' comes from Latin 'familia' which originally itself was the first form of exploitation known to humanity. Slavery developed fully under civilisation and was the precursor of the 'great' families. In fact, the feminists would have it between the sexes, but the division into two classes - an exploiting and an exploited class.

## THE STATE AND MODERN CAPITALISM

In Europe, the feudal state rose out of the collapse of the Roman Empire with the consolidation of the power of the feudal lords came the strengthening of the patriarchal family as part of the establishment of aristocracy. The private right of inheritance, the right of inheritance (e.g., primogeniture, laws of legitimacy, etc.). Women's position in turn became that of a mere chattel.

As feudalism gave way to capitalism the merchants who had built up their economic power within feudal society came to realise the need to overtake the upper classes and fit in with their own interests. The patriarchal, monogamous family of classical laissez-faire capitalism, however, exactly the private property relations which the capitalist state existed to defend. The height of the classical bourgeois state was also the height of the monogamous patriarchal family. In England, for example, Britain, the legal position of married women reached its nadir: no property rights, no rights as a citizen, no rights over their offspring, etc.

Capitalism is now in its period of historical decline. The nineteenth century liberal state has been forced to give way to the modern "interventionist" state which we know today. The legal and social ties of patriarchal law have loosened and the monogamous family unit remains in its most "developed" form - the nuclear family. Despite all the attempts of feminists to escape from this by advocating individual and private solutions and despite the attempts (successful and unsuccessful) to introduce reforms to ameliorate its effects (creches, improved maternity leave, etc.), the position of women remains essentially the same. While the feminists see the cause of women's oppression in male sexism, drive to dominate, the feminists see sexism recognises the historical basis for their servitude. The root of female oppression today lies in the bourgeois family which has a history of struggle, the struggle for its dissolution can only come about with the destruction of the state on which the family depends and at the same time supports.

The State isn't a body imposed on society from outside. It is a result of the irreconcilable antagonism between exploiting and exploited classes. The State is a power apparently standing above society, but it is really subordinate to classes using its public forces paid for out of the taxation of all the citizens. But, in the last analysis, the State is the centre of the most powerful, economically dominant class which by its means becomes also the politically dominant class". And the State, like the family, has taken different forms corresponding in general to the different modes of production. "The ancient state was

above all the state of the slave-owners holding down the slaves ... and the modern representative state is the instrument for exploiting labour by capital." (Marx) Like male domination the state only exists in class society. Thus, even in their outer terms the feminists, by seeking to win reforms within the state, are only dealing with the symptoms of male domination not with its root cause, which is class society. And in practice we have seen how the capitalist state has been used to contain particular crisis like the First World War or the shortage of labour after the Second World War always will make concessions towards equal civil rights. In the First World War it was votes for women that kept the war producing weapons whilst since the Second World War the influx of women into the labour force has helped the labour market. Capitalism has been a significant element in the post war boom. As a result of the increasing economic importance of female labour in the British economy, Parliament finally granted women an Equal Pay Act in 1970, the series of Sex Discrimination Acts from 1975 on. However the fate of these reforms provide us with the picture of what the feminists would have it between the sexes, but the division into two classes - an exploiting and an exploited class.

## AVERAGE GROSS EARNINGS

	MEN	WOMEN
F/Time manual	£172.6	£104.5
F/Time non-manual	£232.0	£126.6
F/Time all occupations	£192.6	£114.7
All Industries and Services		
F/Time manual	£163.6	£101.3
F/Time non-manual	£225.0	£133.8
F/Time all occupations	£192.4	£126.4

Source: Employment Gazette [December 1985]

Paradoxically the failure of these reforms and women's continued low pay has been useful at least in the first part of the recession - more employable. While officially unemployment is 142 millions of women in work have increased in absolute terms whilst 11 million men have been expelled from the labour force.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE UK (Seasonally adjusted figures)		
WOMEN	MEN	
June 1977 9,036,000	13,077,000	
June 1985 9,280,000	11,519,000	

Source: Employment Gazette [November 1985]

In addition to low pay and lower National Insurance and redundancy payments for bosses women workers form 84% of the 44 million part-time workers who have few real employment rights. And as the crisis deepens a few bourgeois women such as the change in the National Insurance regulations of 1982 which wiped 160,000 married women off the unemployed figures since they were not entitled to benefits has been of enormous practical service to capital. It is now estimated that some three quarters of a million married women are now unemployed without officially entering into the figures of the unemployed.

In short the capitalist state can manipulate any "reform" in its economic interest (and indeed, as the examples given here show, only grants reforms when they are of use to its accumulation process) and becoming a wage slave is, in any case, hardly a step towards real liberation.

**REAL LIBERATION**  
Today we live, in global terms, in a society of abundance yet two thirds of the world's

population are undernourished or starving. Never before has humanity had so great a potential capacity to exert some control over nature and yet it has done little to ensure that conserving the ecological balance of the planet. All this is a result of capitalist class society which demands for its continual function the constant accumulation of wealth by the ruling class of the capitalist aristocraples at one pole with the increasing spread of grinding poverty of peoples whose economies have been devastated by imperialist and monopoly capitalism at the other. Today the only way forward for the whole of humanity is for the exploited class, the proletariat, to throw off the shackles of the capitalist system, an international revolution will free production from the dead hand of capitalist profit needs and create a free association of producers dedicated to production for social needs.

This transfer of the means of production into common ownership by the working class that the monogamous family will cease to be the economic unit of society. Society will care for all children alike and with the end of any form of private ownership of one section of society over another, the institution of marriage will vanish. But this vision can only be achieved by a united working class who are effectively fighting capitalism. Individual philosophers, writers, etc. which feminism and other marginal movements spawn are themselves the fashionable products of present-day capitalism acting as barriers to class unity.

The last resort of the feminist is to argue that the communists will not be able to rid society of patriarchal attitudes to which we would agree but the point is that without a communist revolution there will be no basis for any real change in attitudes. Human beings,

"must, in the course of their development begin by themselves producing the material conditions of a new society and no effort of mind or will can free them from this destiny." (K. Marx Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality)

In fact it takes a revolution to sweep away the bulk of the old society as can be seen in the experience of the bourgeois French Revolution and the socialist Russian Revolution. These great events are not simply the fact that women played key roles (in October 1789 it was the sansculotes women of Paris who provided the crucial revolutionaries for the revolution and set up a glimpse of a new role for women in a new society before the capitalist state reasserted its authority in every sense of the word in both Paris and Petersburg). Women never went back to the same position as under the monarchy this was only because they had an important role to play in capitalist accumulation. The revolution of 1917, though this first attempt at proletarian revolution was isolated and defeated does not mean for an instant that the proletariat is defeated for ever. But in the last analysis a counter-revolution shows that there can be a communist revolution can create the conditions for the liberation of all humanity. Providing of course the world working class can rid itself of all divisive ideologies..

\* Human nature. The period Engels termed "savagery" according to him is the state of human existence. Therefore if such a thing as a suprahistorical "human nature" does exist, this is the period in which its roots are to be found.

# RCP : FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE..... ....OF CAPITALISM

Under the relentless offensive of the right wing of the ruling class over the past six years, all those leftist groups who locate essentially within the orbit of the Left, i.e., RCP's "Left", its mouthpiece for a state-capitalist program are - as we documented in WYZC2 - beginning to show signs of political and, in some cases physical fragmentation. An event of these outfits being unable to fulfill their necessary role as foils in the face of the ongoing class struggle capitalism requires to fill the void by spawning organisations whose revolutionary pretensions have a fresh, new, radical air. The most potentially dangerous group is the self-proclaimed "Revolutionary Committee", a 1970's split from the present SWP.

The growth of the RCP is the function of a complex of factors in the disfunction of those described by that in parlance, the "Old Left" had to offer, and the radicalisation of a layer of petit-bourgeoisie. The more marginalifications of the crisis, especially those attracted to marginalist politics dressed up with a "revolutionary" aspect e.g., gay rights, women's liberation, ecology, and so on. The following analysis of key aspects of the platform of the RCP will show that this group has never been a political force in its own right and that moreover, their modernist image is, even on their own terms, a specious one, nothing more than a rehash of old Rightist ideas which are far more reactionary than those of the "Traditional Left" whom they aspire to displace.

## THE RCP TAKES ON THE LABOUR PARTY'

In a major statement of their strategic intentions for '85 - "Breaking the Grip of Capitalism" The Next Step no2 - the RCP spell out why that the "Old Left" is now a spent force. The tone of their political David is nothing short of a face-to-face confrontation with the Collarless Labour Party.

"The RCP's strategy is determined by our perspective of developing a party-participation relationship with the LP." After dismissing the "Cheltenham Pensioners" of Labourism - "Tony Benn and Eric Heffer often seem simply to follow the line of the LP" - we read: "The left's lack of confidence in its own policies has proved its irrelevance". Castigating the LP as a "party of capitalist political and moral desolation", the RCP discover inflated confidence in its new found "relevance" and with characteristic modesty, we are told that "the time has come to make for a more direct confrontation between the RCP and the remnant of the traditional Left." (quotes pp 62).

In contrast to the confraternities of the "median regime" of last century, the RCP share one very important political and hence methodological fallacy; that the LP remains a reformist party of the working class and is well ill-suited to the task of leading the LF has served to administer the national economy on no less than seven occasions this century. For us an historic rubric was crossed when the bulk of European Social Democracy who supported the respective ruling classes on the outbreak of the first generalised imperialist war of this century, that is, the parties of the 2nd International, together with the LF, International, were part of a process integrated into capitalism as are apparent; on the today it is an axiomatic starting point for the communist left that the LP is a tried and tested dogmatic party of the working class. Our document, however, continues our tactical attitude to the so called "Labour Movement" and is an element of a class line which demarcates Marxism from LP/SDP/PSD.

Just how revolutionary is the RCP's perspective is demonstrated by their wholehearted embracing of bourgeois electoralism, when they take the next unequivocal step of saying "Over the next months the party must get into full gear for the run up to the next general election. We need

to work out in detail the strategic and tactical implications of taking on the LP on a wide range of issues." In other words for the RCP it's the ruling class that calls the shots; the primary principle of instilling the need for revolutionarity is manifestly quite foreign to their outlook. The sheer opportunism involved in this tactic is reflected in the title of the same article (TNS2) - "From a tactical point of view it is always better if we are seen to be taking on our opponents from the left."

## THE R.C.P. AND THE UNIONS.

The whole spectrum of leftism, RCP included, work on the assumption that trade unions are implicitly socialist class organisations and that their capacity to defend their members interests is continually threatened by a centrally bureaucratised leadership. This leads them to understand that it is the capitalist terrain on which the unions operate i.e. the mercantile or the terms of sale of the commodity labour power, that makes this form of organisation unsuitable for the defence of workers' interests in the permanent crisis of capitalism's decline.

Once the labour market is deregulated and replaced by a "revolutionary" one, the objective role of unionism will be somehow magically transformed.

What goes along with this general line, the RCP seem to build "independent unions" - whose specific nature is never defined - which will "make the unions into real organisations they ought to be in the present situation". The logic of this position can only mean that the RCP want to make the unions more thoroughly capitalist and less effective means for defending class struggle.

The January edition of TNS contains a balance sheet of union struggles for '85, where an attempt is made to assess the relative success of the struggle by analytically reducing a complex problem to "the irrelevance of the strategies of the left".

The "irrelevance" of the RCP's "modern strategy" is demonstrated by the example of the post-war period, the miners strike, was one where the miners heard from the RCP nothing but calls to go back to work. The miners, however, did not do that, on a strike which the miners themselves had launched and held firm for an entire year. In attempting to freeze the movement of the miners, the RCP, as a capitalist democracy, to kill it, the RCP were aligning themselves with that whole battery of forces which the ruling class has at its disposal to subdue the working class from the right wing of the TUC to the right wing of the Trade Unions. The tactic propagated by revolutionaries in order to break the miners isolation, was for an internationalisation of the strike, particularly to involve the miners.

Kors.

The RCP is very concerned about the emergence of "scab-unionism": "The split in the working class and the emergence of scab-unionism on a wide scale is a serious threat to the labour movement. In the absence of a communist policy or analysis, however, the RCP finds itself drawn back into the fold of the official labour movement, so-called 'MILITANCY' for its anti-utopian image and methods, in order to make a strident defence of the NUM against the likes of the TUC and against those right wing unions that have been formed among ambulancemen, railwaymen and teachers. The RCP cannot grasp is that all trade unionists in the present historical period is still obliged to fight for the right of strike in relation to the whole class and its struggle for emancipation.

A strain of libertarian anarchism, never very far from the surface of the RCP's thinking recognises that the same article was discussing was of diminishing "workers cynicism about militancy"; - "These sentiments are often strongest among workers who are most alienated from the time-honoured tradition of the official labour movement - women, blacks, youth,

unskilled workers." The opportunist logic of this approach can be translated more honestly: "Since we can't seem to do much with the organised workers, the main body of the class, let's see if we can influence the unorganised i.e. the marginal strata."

## MARGINALISM, THE RCP'S NATURAL STOMPING GROUND.

"The RCP has always emphasised the importance of moving beyond the narrow trade-union focus of the traditional left and taking up the struggle against all forms of repression..." - TNS no2 (p7) Seeking shortcuts to Marxism and looking for tactics to implement it, the revolutionary class has been the stock-in-trade of the "New Left" from Marcuse to Gorz, as well as a variety of radicalist neophiliacs throughout the world. They are a middle class in a process of decomposition.

Again p7 "Because of the RCP's record of anti-state propaganda and activity... and here they include agitation for women's rights, gay rights, environmentalism etc... we are in a strong position to develop these sentiments into a wider anti-capitalist outlook." The following quote from the same article (pp 22-23) also illustrates very aptly the RCP's political and tactical myopia on this question:

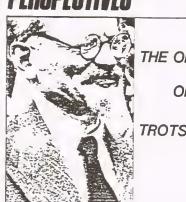
"...we write within the framework of social questions of potential revolution... Capitalism has proved on an empirical level that movements based on secondary aspects of capitalist oppression are not the ones that lead to capitalism. They are its healthy diet. Sexual and racial discrimination are banned by bourgeois statute and are being fought by the middle class with bourgeois councils and bourgeois administrators a sector of their housing for them...these movements are anticommunist and don't challenge the basis of Capitalism. They are not the ones that reflect aims of these movements simply reinforce the body of bourgeois ideology... To challenge single aspects of capitalism on their own is to reinforce it. None of the movements involved are led to cynicism and demoralisation."

THE "RIGHT" TO BE "OPPOSED".

A central and recurring theme of the RCP's platform is the defence of "rights" e.g. "Some trade union officials are prepared to sacrifice everything that trade unionism stands for in the name of the right to work, the right to decent wages and conditions." The demand for the right to work has never been a clear expression of the interests of the working class. It is a continuation on p 7

**REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES**

22



**THE ORIGINS OF TROTSKYISM**

PLUS - • The Rome Theses (Theses of the P.C.d'I 1922) ICC and the Italian Left

• Analysis of the Miners Strike

Theoretical Journal of the Communist Workers Organisation

## ULSTER : ELECTIONS AGAINST THE WORKERS

In late January the working class of Northern Ireland was once again offered the dubious privilege of participating in the capitalist class elections. This time, though on the resignation of Unionist M.P.s, the series of by-elections were held by the Loyalists and the media hacked away at them as an unclerkly referendum to establish credibility to last November's Anglo-Irish Agreement - a show of strength to Thatcher and her Northern Ireland Office ministers.

It is a basic communist position to stress the irrelevance to the working class of such racial/class fascism battles and indeed the positive dangers of workers even grudgingly participating on capitalist terrain. However, what has been accepted about the election results is often not the lack of impact even within the terms of capitalism's politics. The central ploy of the two parties in the 'Parliamentary phase' of their opposition to the Agreement was a non-event.

The subsequent contortions of the Unionists serve only to confirm the analysis we made in *Workers Voice* no.26 (available from group address) where we pointed out that relative weakness within the British Government's determination to implement the Agreement as part of its attempts to cut the financial and economic strings of the working class. The results were showing a decisive majority against the accord, Thatcher's ministers were on television contemptuously dismissing any notion that they could not now modify a strategy which has the backing of the entire Western Bloc (e.g. Irish Government, the EEC, the USA).

In any case, the mechanics of cross-border co-operation have already been set in place, with the British Government's policy of taking on a larger burden of security, and the possible political benefits being demonstrated in the by-elections by the erosion of support for Sinn Fein/IRA to the advantage of the SDLP (pro-agreement nationalists).

### RCP continued from p.6

**IRELAND AND THE "NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE"**  
fused demand because it assumes the working class can have 'rights' under capitalism. Working-class individuals and communities i.e. as social atoms, formally enjoy rights as 'equals' before the law, but in its actual operation the political power our exploited class can have no legal expression which is not at the same time a negation of capitalist law. Ruling class law cannot be separated from the reality of the domination of capital over labour i.e. are an ideological camouflage of actual power relations. The capitalist system has the 'right' to exploit workers and then throw them on the dole; workers on the other hand are driven by dire need to sell their labour-power. The so called 'right to work' is determined by the blind mechanism of the market.

The fact that 'rights' have always been secondary aspects of Marxist thought is nothing new. In his introduction to the first English translation of Marx's *Capital*, Engels wrote: "If one demands the right to work in this society, one demands the right to work in every workshop and workhouse, in every capitalist and colonialist state, in every capitalist country, and the workhouses have been superseded by giant state-subsidized projects - today's 'Youth Training Schemes' are the embryonic form of the slave labour camps of Hitler's Germany and Russia or Hitler's Germany. The real active demand for the 'right to work' slogan is the demand for work in all the capitalist countries, in all the capitalist states, in all the capitalist countries and industry divisions, in a generalized unification of the workers of both nations in a struggle for common, not national, power."

"Oppression" is a concept in the RCP's terminology. This concept has a diluted meaning in a Marxist vocabulary i.e. it is an international abstraction. Under the term 'exploitation' which is also a quantifiable, oppression is nebulous and emotive, in a word, ideological. Because all black workers are not black proletarians, nor for the liberal leftist there is only a difference of degree, not of kind between the black proletariat and the nascent black bourgeoisie. The RCP's 'revolutionaries' always seek to explain and base their policies on qualitative i.e. class differences.

This is nothing new of course, but it is particularly sickening to see the document produced by the RCP's supporters in the social wage (which have hit both 'sides' of the community) being channelled into futile and reactionary nationalism. It is also absurd to see the 'privileged status' of Protestant workers in Ulster when the province boasts some of the highest unemployment rates in Western Europe. Similarly it is idiotic for Republicans to claim that Irish unity is a necessary first step in solving Catholic social problems.

Instead, communists point to the irrelevance of both Loyalism and Republicanism in this epochal economic crisis and imperialist domination, and we call for workers' unity in their resistance to the attacks of the capitalist class on the working class in Ulster (an idea which has again re-surfaced) or a united Ireland would be just as subject to U.S. imperialism as Eire and the UK are today, and they would be subjected to the same packages forced on all national regimes by the crisis of capitalism on a world scale.

The Communist Workers Organisation supports all the struggles of the working class, where its independence from capitalist and capitalist institutions is asserted. Therefore in Ireland not only do we support the 'economic' class struggle, but also the class fight which shatter the myths of nationalism/religion which have been so prevalent and destructive for generations.

In this light, the hysteria around resistance to the Anglo-Irish Agreement can be seen as purely reactionary. This goes as far as for those Catholics who are rallying around Irish nationalism as for those Protestants who are involved in Loyalist demonstrations etc. In reality, the vast majority of communists proclaim that the only road to meaningful liberation lies not down these reactionary dead-ends, but through the class struggle, for which the IRA has stayed in the background of Irish social life.

to be progressive, the tactical grounds for proletarian support of nationalism no longer exist. What Marx said over a century ago is today ten times more true: the working class has no fatherland; it is very existence as a global class is the living embodiment of internationalism.

In the light of this, the RCP's 'unconditional admiration' of Slim Fein is an opportunist obsequiousness of the most odious sort. According to the RCP, the Hillsborough Agreement was the most important factor in the political isolation of the Protestant bourgeoisie,

and the British, over a period of time, are responsible for the decline of the RCP.

"The financial drain on the Exchequer. This is one of the reasons why it is proving so difficult to end the Falklands conflict," etc.

However, as we intimated in PFL5, the long term objective of British capital remains that of maintaining its influence under British and EEC informal economic control; in this their perspective coincides with that of Slim Fein and ipso facto the RCP.

"By supporting the struggle of oppressed communities against the forces that oppress them, workers in the West can hasten the defeat of the system that degrades us all." TNS 17th Jan. The RCP put this erroneous conclusion into practice during the Falklands War when it came out in support of the 'oppressed' Gaullist regime of Argentina. By supporting the 'revolutionary' definition which calls on workers to turn all national wars into civil wars, the RCP once again shows its true stripes.

The 'RCP', then, is the opposite of what its name suggests; neither 'revolutionary', 'communist' and certainly not a party which represents the historic interests of the class of the future.



The workers must not fight their bosses; battles; movement much weaker than that which caused the Labour government to U-turn in 1974.

It goes without saying that these developments in the political superstructure in Ulster have been accompanied by the strengthening of the process by which social questions are seen in terms of nationalities and religious differences. The fact that Protestant and Catholic workers have apparently responded to the language of outright sectarianism is perhaps the most worrying development, for communists of the whole island.

IN THE LIGHT OF THIS, THE RCP's 'unconditional admiration' of Slim Fein is an opportunist obsequiousness of the most odious sort. According to the RCP, the Hillsborough Agreement was the most important factor in the political isolation of the Protestant bourgeoisie, and the British, over a period of time, are responsible for the decline of the RCP.

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# THE CONDITION OF

## THE WORKING CLASS

To paraphrase Di Tella's dictum, there are lies, damned lies and bourgeois statistics. The latest volume of *Social Trends* (no. 16, pub. HMSO) contains a wealth of statistics, some of which are misleading because they are compiled by people working within a bourgeois conceptual framework, and some which appear to be designed to mislead.

An example of the latter are those figures which enable the authors to conclude that pensioners are now about 50% better off, relative to the population as a whole, than they were in 1951. (In fact, because they are compiled by people working within a bourgeois conceptual framework, and some which appear to be designed to mislead.

First let's have a closer look at the RPI. It is based on the "Total Personal Disposable Income" (TPI) of pensioners relative to non-pensioners. In 1951 a pensioner's TPI was 52% of a nonpensioner's; now it is 68%. However, the TPI suffers from two defects: although it is claimed a "pensioner" does not take account of rent or mortgage repayments or other unavoidable expenditure as it is just income from almost all sources (see below), minus insurance premiums, National Insurance contributions - so it ignores the social trend away from pensioners living with their families, and the consequent increase in their accommodation costs; and it does not include any income from within the pensioner's family, and there is almost certainly a significant amount of "transfers of capital" as *Social Trends* claims.

Thus the "fact" that pensioners are better off dissolves into a very shaky conjecture.

Despite the inclusion of the above statistical jiggery-pokery, most of the figures of interest to Marxists in *Social Trends* are probably honest but conceptually flawed. In practice, this means that new results must be treated with caution as the re-interpretation will introduce errors as well as eliminating them.

For example, *Social Trends* claims that "from the end of 1982 wage-earners on average improved their take-home spending power". Does this mean that workers in work have become better off, as some have claimed?

At first sight this appears to be the case, as the Tax and Price Index (TPI) was, for example, 2.94% in 1982 and manual workers' earnings increased by about 9% in that year.

However, this (i) assumes that inflation is the same for everybody; (ii) ignores increases in the rate of exploitation brought about by productivity deals etc.

The TPI is obtained from the Retail Price Index (RPI) by taking into account income tax and NI contributions.

First let's have a closer look at the RPI. It is based on the "average of the basket of commodities purchased by the average household in the year in question... but different classes consume different amounts of different things (an example: in 1983, the incomes of households in the top 20% spent 4.71% of their income on fuel, light and power, whereas the next 60% of households spent an average 6.87% and so capitalists and workers in different "bands", different "RPI's"). Assuming that the upper 20% of households represent the employed section of the working class (unfortunately, errors are unavoidable here, as available statistics only come in annual detail for the top 20%, the next 20%, etc., of households). A more appropriate figure for capitalists would be the top 10%, and it is clear that the bottom 20% contain many workers. Thus, also, working class households with three or more wage members can quite easily find themselves in the "top 10%" band. The 1982-3 "employed workers" RPI<sup>1</sup> was 5.22 and the "capitalist" RPI<sup>2</sup> was 4.96%; a difference of over 4% for employed workers and capitalists. Prices inflation (%/a) is not just a temporary phenomena: the average figures over the past ten years are 15% and 14.7% respectively).

When we come to the TPI we find that tax effects on the overall index. Consider 3 households, A, B, and C, where A's income is equal to the average for the middle 60%, B's is equal to the average for the top 20% and C is in the 1% 'elite'. Assume that C is a couple of married couples, and only one partner works in each. Let A's income be entirely earned and let 10% and 60% of B and C's income be investment income respectively.

Then we have the following table:

	'82-3			'83-4		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
income:						
before taxation	17,830	35,440	33,610	17,450	35,440	33,610
after RPI <sup>1</sup>	3785	17,063	35,470	17,669	16,744	36,794
after income tax	4617	12,179	18,155	4700	12,396	20,141
adjusted for inflation since '82-3	4617	12,179	38,155	4475	11,813	19,511
individual's type:	-	-	-	3,122	3,015	5,123

<sup>1</sup> A and C are assumed constant but

The row above the bottom one contains the household real net incomes in 1983 terms (thus any wage increase in the bottom shows the percentage decrease (so a negative figure represents an increase) in those incomes in 1983-4.

The published figure for the TPI is an average of all households, weighted according to their net incomes. This means, for instance, that a household like C counts for about 4% times as much as one like A in the final figure.

Although the cumulative effect of the

difference between the inflation rate experienced by workers and capitalists is important, this difference between pales into insignificance when compared with the 30% difference between the wage rate and the increase in manual workers' average earnings, which we take as indicative of all workers' earnings. So it appears that workers in employment are better off.

This appearance is shown to be deceptive when we consider the price paid by the working class to the capitalist in 1983. The average industrial concern (including, of course, nationalised companies) made £10,469,000 worked by 1982; this had risen to £11,869,000, an increase of 11.2% above the alleged improvement in "take-home spending-power". (As the wage-bill of the commercial enterprises rose by 147,200 to £48,875M and the total surplus rose from £79,818M to £84,614M, we can make low - because taxes should be subtracted from wages - and high surpluses estimates for the rate of surplus value of 169.0% and 173.12% respectively).

What about unemployed workers? Here there is no question of an improvement of living standards. The average weekly expenditure of households in the bottom 20% fell from £19.21 in 1983 to £18.45 in 1984, reflecting both an increase in the numbers unemployed and increase in the length of time spent on the dole. The average weekly wage for a year or more rose to 1.2 million in 1983, and the number unemployed for two or more years rose to 1 million. Despite some slight attempts at fiddling these figures by re-defining "unemployment", these figures were 1.1 and 1 million in 1985.

Another statistic reflecting the absolute impoverishment of the section of the working class is the percentage of the number of homeless households from 89,000 in 1983 to 94,000 (this does not include the 44,000 households which were accepted as being homeless without being officially assessed) nor the 53,000 who only thought they were homeless - as if homelessness was simply a matter of being without a home! a year later. Note that the outside rate has increased by 32% in 1985!

In conclusion, we find that the slightly improved living standards of employed workers have been more than paid for by their increased exploitation, and overall the average of all workers in their conditions is not so great that they have no choice but to fight collectively. Individual and sectional solutions to the effects of the crisis of capitalism will still appear possible. But just as the crisis is working its way like gangrene from the periphery to the heartland of capitalism, the full effects of the crisis will affect the unemployed to the employed workers in the heartlands themselves. The bourgeoisie will be forced by the fall in rate of profit to attempt to further increase the rate of exploitation without maintaining living standards. In doing this it will inevitably use the employed workers, that is, of unemployment to force down wages, that is, it will use the difference between the material conditions of the employed and unemployed workers that cry out for intervention. The more successful the bourgeoisie is in doing this, the more obvious the common interests of the employed and unemployed will become. Thus the answer lies for a communist intervention pointing out that the entire working class has the same interests, will be stronger and firmer. This intervention will use the fact that capitalism has no choice but to attempt to overthrow workers' living standards to drive home the necessity for the overthrow of capitalism itself.

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## SOUTH AFRICA

## CLASS STRUGGLE NOT SANCTIONS

Neither the intensity of the social conflict in South Africa nor the ferocity of the repression carried out by the apartheid regime show any signs of abating. Black workers in South Africa are striking and taking to the streets in an unexampled display of heroic resistance against the racism and symbiosis under the state of emergency, just as they did before its declaration. In its present form the South African state can only function as a salaried administrative apparatus, throwing aside all its "democratic" pretences, which anyone never had any reason to believe in. The black masses' continuation of the present social conflict indefinitely is unthinkable. Either there will be a greatly increased attack on the black population which will probably provide a temporary respite or the apartheid regime will be overthrown by the black social movement. There are, however, options that pose a threat to the continued political interests of western imperialism in South Africa at risk, and every day the urgency of enforcing a solution that protects these interests grows.

### WESTERN IMPERIALISM DIVIDED.

Let us be quite clear: none of the various statesmen who pontificate about finding a solution to the crisis have anything but the interests of western imperialism in mind. All "enlightened persons", "EEC emissaries" or shuttle diplomat clergymen went to bring the establishment of democracy and development in South Africa, where the black (and other) workers are exploited under conditions which do not bring about a state of permanent crisis. That much unites them; what is less clear is how this situation is brought about.

One wing of the international bourgeoisie, though it is increasingly isolated, wants to give Botha and his cronies another chance, to main "dialogue" and "covert". This group, best represented by the US and the British bourgeois interests, argue that the process of "form in South Africa will be best continued by not leaving Pretoria too quickly. They fear that if Botha falls, there is no telling what would replace him, possibly a pro-Soviet ANC in the worst scenario. They may argue against sanctions, but they believe that Botha and lead to "sanctions", while crying crocodile tears about the suffering sanctions would cause such workers under the material basis for such a perspective lies in the fact that it is the British bourgeoisie which has the largest economic stake in South Africa, which it fears would be lost in any generalised campaign of sanctions.

But the development of events is leaving this section of the bourgeoisie increasingly isolated. It was with great difficulty that Thatcher held the line against EEC sanctions and came up with her "mission impossible" for the period November to December "line" states. Similarly at the meeting of the Commonwealth leaders in London, Thatcher was shown to be out of a limb, and had to make concessions to partial economic sanctions.

More and more international imperialism

realizing that the cosmetic reforms passed by Botha are in no way a step towards the abolition of minority rule, are attempting to make minority rule more acceptable to the black masses. And it is glaringly obvious that this is not the abolition of apartheid which allows the emerging black bourgeoisie to sell social peace to the masses, but only the installation of a political structure which pretends to represent the black majority, that is bourgeois democracy in the form of one man, one vote.

### IT IS THE INTRANSIGENCE OF THE AFRIKAANER RULING CLASS

that leads increasing

circle of western imperialists to argue that only the application of economic

sanctions on the South African economy,

which is already reeling from the effects of

the world economic crisis, will force the

Afrikaner ruling class to negotiate with

the black opposition groups such as

"multi-racial" organisations like the ANC.

This faction of the bourgeoisie believes

that the Tambo and Mandela, who

have long proclaimed that their

western interests will be able to hold

the black masses in check, in a way that

Botha and his ilk no longer can.

### THE SHOAL DEBATE ABOUT SANCTIONS

is one

between two wings of western imperialism

about how to bring a situation

less threatening to its interests. Communists do not take part in this debate, whose framework is alien to class struggle. These around the question of how best beat the working class can defend their immediate and long term interests against imperialism in all its forms. Perhaps surprisingly sundry varieties of leftists, from the Morning Star to Socialist Worker, will all join in this debate, which shows that the sanctions, as if any form of economic warfare between capitalist states could advance the interests of the working class one iota.

### INSIDE SOUTH AFRICA.

While the furor over sanctions reigns the international bourgeoisie are not staying still in South Africa itself. Botha has to have contained for the moment the fury of the right wing mercenary elements who oppose any concessions changes in the apartheid system and the action of the state of emergency and crackdown on black political groups. At the same time, he has been attempting to break the back of the black movement in the townships, arming black thugs to terrorise political activists and also making attempts to seek a social basis for the white working class, like the tribal chiefs who would accept some kind of client status in a white regime. But it is difficult to see these desperate measures as anything but a real attempt at a political solution, only a hedge against possible civil war.

### Meanwhile,

there is the more muted, but in

the end, more powerful pressure of his

business in South Africa on the Bothas

to engage in dialogue with the

black opposition. These people seem,

in their dealings with the black unions,

and talks with the ANC, that here is the

only social force which can restore peace in the factories, mines and townships. Any prospect of sanctions would increase the power of those from South African capitalists on the regime.

But in the final analysis, what happens in South Africa will not be decided by bishops or businessmen, but by the South African working class. Whether the rulers of South Africa will be able to decide whether imperialism will manage to bring about a smooth transition to majority rule, or whether apartheid will be swept away by the popular movement is a question that will be settled in the heat of class confrontation.

### REAL SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS.

The way forward for South African workers is to build a popular front to expose the imperialist nature of the Sanctions Commission, to demand a decisive overthrow of the apartheid regime, not to await the maneuvers of international imperialism, the church, the media, clerics and clowns. And real solidarity with their struggle does not consist in boycotting goods, or in the demand of compensation for sanctions as if they were morally good and morally bad commodities, or good and bad forms of exploitation of labour power. We do not support the democratic or racial exploitations, but for the abolition of relations of exploitation.

Real solidarity with the workers of South Africa, as with workers everywhere, consists in extending and unifying our own struggles against the capitalist heartlands especially against those who pose as the "friends" of South Africa. workers must be reassured that we can "do nothing" now. Communists work in the South African diaspora, black and white, to win a kernel to our cause and help to extend the influence of the working class in South Africa via, such a means. Workers can certainly take up workplace collectives in solidarity with those working in the South African diaspora, and to support their strikes. Employees of multi-nationals hit by strikes in South Africa should be allowed to flow to active class brothers abroad, since the workers' struggle knows no frontiers. Upon suspicion that the Sanctions Commission is being sent to aid the regression of the South African proletariat, workers involved in its production and transport should take all steps to prevent its reaching its goal.

But this is CLASS action, and has nothing to do with a campaign of pin pricks designed to good effect. The international communists hate every form of exploitation. That of the countries of the Pacific Basin is brutal in the extreme, but we dont propose economic boycotts as the solution to the woes of the Korean or Hong Kong workers, but class struggle.

### DOWN WITH THE APARTHEID STATE! FOR ITS OVER-THROWN BY CLASS STRUGGLE!

-AGAINST IMPERIALIST PEACE MOVES IN SOUTH AFRICA. NO TO "DEMOCRATIC" EXPLOITATION!

-AGAINST THE CHARADE OF SANCTIONS: FOR CLASS SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS!

# **THE END OF THE OIL BOOM**

The first six months of 1986 saw the price of crude oil fall from nearly 30 dollars a barrel, to below 10 dollars, touching a low of \$5.50 in January. In the wake of the failure of the June meeting of OPEC oil ministers to come to any agreement, it became clear that the world crisis of capitalism had at last reached the oil industry with full force. Whatever agreements are patched up in future it is clear that oil is experiencing the fate of other commodity prices in a capitalist crisis/collapse.

The form of the present crisis is the outcome of two conflicting trends. On the one side we see the massive increase in the world's oil production capacity traceable to the oil crisis of the early 1970's. The huge price increases then imposed by OPEC had the effect of stimulating much new production outside of direct OPEC control. Western imperialism sought to maintain secure supplies of its lifeblood. But much of this new production was only artificially profitable, due to the artificially high price of oil at that time.

The other side of the coin was, that there was no corresponding rise in demand for oil, to match this increased supply potential. Indeed, as the economic crisis began to hit, and as conservation measures began to take effect, oil demand fell sharply. This decline relatively, and then absolutely. In June this year, the Institute of Petroleum reported domestic demand for oil down by almost 25% over the year from early 1985.

By acting as the policemen of the world's oil prices, the OPEC countries were slow to notice these developments, and were rewarded with an ever decreasing market share. From 50% of world oil, their sales were down to 23% from 1979 to 1986. It was to reverse this trend that the OPEC states, many heavily indebted to western banks,

flooded the oil markets with cheap oil at the beginning of the present crisis, hoping to force a bargain with OPEC producers to come to any agreement, it became clear that the world crisis of capitalism had at last reached the oil industry with full force. Whatever agreements are patched up in future it is clear that oil is experiencing the fate of other commodity prices in a capitalist crisis/collapse.

Much has been written in the bourgeois press about the effect of the collapse in oil prices in those countries like Nigeria and Indonesia, which have seen their development dependent on oil, and which have since found themselves virtually bankrupt. A closer look at events in the British oil industry will show that the freak situation which has ensured the solvency of British capitalism for the past decade is also ending.

## **CRISIS IN THE BRITISH OIL INDUSTRY.**

Since North Sea oil is one of the costliest to produce in the world, it has been severely hit. Workers in the oil industry, who were relatively immune from state controls in the boom years, have now become subject to the same cost cutting measures that their class compatriots in other industries have endured for so long.

The industry's immediate response was to halt the rate of expansion and to cancel many existing contracts. Even major oil rig yards were among the first casualties, and prospects for some are very bleak, especially Ward Doris at Loch Kishorn and Heriot's Leven. At Stena, the shipyard at Ardrosser has announced that 550 jobs are to go in August, unless things improve.

In the hinterland of the U.K.'s oil "capital", Aberdeen, the oil industry had masked the effects of the world economic crisis, despite the fact that the OPEC states, many heavily indebted to western banks,

directly and indirectly for up to half of local employment, and kept unemployment at levels below the national average. Precise figures are difficult to come by, but in May alone 1100 redundancies were notified in Aberdeen, and at least 3000 jobs have been lost since the collapse in oil prices. And there is more to come. A recent alliance survey of oil related companies showed that 100% expected to shed labour in the coming months.

For those still employed it's the familiar refrain: the rest of the class has been sacrificed for all alone. Real wages are under increasing pressure. In June, the oil supply boats to the North Sea struck in response to a call for a 25% cut in operating costs. The NMU negotiated "victory" in exchange an oil industry freeze, longer duty rotas and cuts in sick pay and holiday pay. On the oil rigs themselves, unilateral cuts in wages are being imposed.

## **THE FUTURE.**

Obviously the oil price will recover from its present level, but most analysts expect that it will stay below 20 dollars a barrel, at which point much of North Sea oil capacity will have to be written off. The effect of this will greatly reduce the tax revenue of the British state, and the prelude to even more draconian attacks on the living standards of the working class.

As the crisis has finally reached the previous stage of generalised depression, it serves to illustrate yet again that no country or sector can escape the effects of the economic crisis, and that that crisis must be fought within the framework of the capitalist system. Millions of workers can be under the illusion that they are exempt from the effects of the crisis, only a complete effort by all workers can sweep away for good the rule of Capitalism.

# **WAPPING**

As the dispute at Wapping moves into its eighth month, newspaper owners everywhere are watching its development carefully. They're hoping (or for a defeat of the Wapping strikers) that will give them reinforced ammunition to attack their own workers. The Guardian, the Telegraph, the Daily Mail, the Mail on Sunday and the Financial Times all plan to move to docklands within the next year, and redundancy and cuts are high on the agenda. In fact the Financial Times has recently announced it will sack 404 workers before it moves to its new plant in the Docklands. Paper workers in the newspaper industry haven't taken this lying down. Beside Wapping, 176 NGA workers are in dispute with their employer, and plan to go on strike. They were sacked in April after refusing to accept his "survival plan" which would have meant 55 compulsory redundancies. Cuts in take home pay and the strikers' demands are facing the same problems as those at Wapping in carrying out their dispute. Their biggest problem is that they are alone. The strikers are all NGA members, SOTG 92, the Amalgamated Engineering Union and the EETPU have all negotiated away their members' jobs in Britain and have left it to individual districts to negotiate individual members as to whether or not to cross the picket line if any attempt is made to move the machinery from the plant. Maxwell's workers are also alone, having been locked out of the Burnley Express for taking solidarity action in support of clerical workers and opposing the introduction of direct input technology. The NGA members have attempted to link this dispute with that going on at Purnells, even though 500 workers there stand to lose their jobs there. It goes without saying that these two print strikes have been kept as separate as possible from that in Wapping by the print unions. At the recent NGA conference

Dubbins spent his time concentrating on calling for a Labour government to come to power. He echoed Neil Kinnock's belief that "only British citizens should be able to own Britain's nationalised newspapers and television". Following the lead of Dean backed Dubbins' call for the next Labour government to introduce legislation making ownership of the press a British concern, a letter was sent, dearly held by the National Front, who have issued pickets at Wapping saying "6,000 sacked by an American. Are you British? We'll keep our newspapers British". The unions' obsession with Murdoch's country of birth is just a way of avoiding the real issues at Wapping at the moment. Ever since he plucked the Amalgamated Press' "final offer" of £50 million plus his Gray's Inn Road plant, the strike itself, rather than being stepped up, has reached something of a stalemate. The unions, rather than calling out all the members, have instead tried to channel their demands into a consumer boycott of Murdoch's papers. The fact that the strike campaign has had little effect on the sales figures, it has become the foremost tactic of the unions, even though it has meant the Sotg strikers are no longer to be paid the £10 a week strike pay, since the union would rather keep the money for the boycott. The unions idea is that by buying one of Maxwell's or Shaws papers rather than the Sun or the Mirror, help the strike is of little comfort to the 176 printers locked out by Maxwell at the moment. Consumer boycotts have never been successful as a way of substitute for class solidarity. The strikers were defeated in their strike because they were on their own, and the print workers will share the same fate unless they link up with other workers. As it stands at the moment since the start of the strike in our leaflets, the way the Wapping workers will succeed is if they take the initiative and take the struggle into their own

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# THE PRISON REVOLT IN PERU

It is now ten years since Mao Tse Tung died and in the course of that time the failure of China's revolution has led to the exhaustion of her resources or indeed the "socialism" which Mao often proclaimed has led, not only to a rapprochement between the present Chinese rulers and the West but to a complete disintegration of Maoism as an ideology and consequently to the collapse of Maoist organisations. One of the few exceptions to this general Cominternism is the situation the subject of the article below, translated from BATTAGLIA COMUNISTA 7/8 (July 1986) paper of our sister organisation in Italy, the International Communists Party. The article, whilst only intended as a report of the recent prison massacres in Lima, it underlines the fact that whatever its pretensions, the Communist Party of Peru (Sendero Luminoso) is still trapped within the framework of bourgeois politics. It is not possible to show all the elements of their politics in this brief introduction but the main point is that the party's claim to a genuine revolutionary heritage of Stalin (since this is the basis of Maoism) will indicate what the Peruvian masses can look to expect from the Communists if they come to power. It was not simply "bureaucratic methods" which led to Stalin's labour camps but to the need for the USSR to accumulate capital to compete with the other imperialist rivals. The narrow nationalism of the likes of the CPB, thinly disguised as anti-imperialism, treads the same road as Stalin did (the same logic of the "revolution of 'Socialism in one country'" and will therefore be no more successful in liberating the Peruvian masses from their appalling conditions than all the other democratic efforts of this century. Whilst the actions of Sendero Luminoso have exposed the lie of Peruvian "democracy" they cannot offer a genuine alternative to the working class in Peru (especially since they recognise the peasantry rather than the proletariat as the basis of "the revolution". For international communists however, the movements which are at present led by forces like the CPB are at the same time signs of the readiness of more and more of the masses in capitalist's periphery for revolutionary and anti-imperialist struggle. This has followed so many other acts of violence (e.g. five technicians beaten to death) that the Government was forced to proclaim a state of emergency and a curfew in the regions involved;

"...the material existence of the masses favours the radicalisation of consciousness. Such radical potential facilitates the circulation of the revolutionary communist programme. Obviously we are not saying that radicalisation is the same as revolutionary communism or vice versa. But the fact remains that it is easier to spread the communist programme among the masses, and revolutionary communists receive "more attention" from the capitalist and imperialist societies. Such "better" conditions imply the possibility of organising masses of proletarians around the revolutionary party." (p.13)

"Socialism" in power didn't make the country progress by a single step. It has, on the contrary, unleashed a very violent and extreme right wing which has still got the reins of real power completely in its hands. The young President, Alan Garcia, was quick to say that he wanted the three social democracies (so much so that he would like the "Socialist International" to be based in Lima) and he is forced to hold in check the far right who are mid-way through the encounter taking the character of a trial of strength between different factions of the bourgeoisie, divided not only over political questions but also over their international "sympathies".

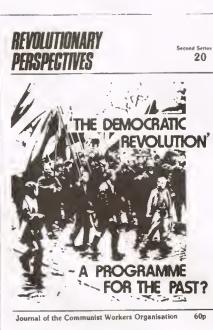
It was Garcia himself, however, who unleashed the ferocious repression against the prisoners. Once the deed was done he had to hear buckets of crocodile tears to demonstrate his sense at the "horrible massacre" and to show that he is ready to make those responsible pay the "full price". He thus created a distinction between the Army and the police who carried out the revolt (their operation had already led to a score of deaths amongst the prisoners), and the agents of the Shining Path, the crack as well as Red Brigades, responsible for the said massacre. This distinction was later silently watered down in the arrest of some insignificant scampagists.

## The revolt in the Peruvian prisons

On June 19th the eighteenth act of capitalist barbarism took place in Peru. Following a revolt which had broken out in the prison of F. Fontan, Aviñon and Santa Barbara more than 500 of the inmates were massacred after they had surrendered and were waiting to return to their cells.

A lot of these prisoners belonged to the guerrilla movement "Sendero Luminoso" ("Shining Path"). Marxist group which has succeeded in creating a firm stronghold in the prisons and had begun a process of political indoctrination of the ordinary prisoners aided by the condition of hunger, poverty and economic marginalisation prevalent in Peru.

After the massacre the country was shaken by a frightening series of dynamitations, amongst which was that of a train near Cuzco in which eleven people lost their lives. This had followed so many other acts of violence (e.g. five technicians beaten to death) that the Government was forced to proclaim a state of emergency and a curfew in the regions involved;



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Sendero Luminoso has been given the opportunity for growth by the dramatic social reality of Peru where many Indians live in conditions which have not gone beyond the middle ages in which large numbers of people, divided into small or tiny communities, survive by working some pocket handkerchief-sized piece of land which yields a few ears of maize and some potatos.

In 1968, under the "progressive" military regime of General Velasco Alvarado, the Peruvian ruling class had tried to create new social structures and start the economic and political modernisation of the country. This attempt was a miserable failure.

It was followed by a static period which became objectively more regressive until the victory of the APRA party (Peru's own brand of socialism) in 1976. The new government had to a new programme for reform. But Peru conforms to the general rule which compels all countries in the capitalist periphery to develop a static economy which separates them and the country in the capitals of capitalism. The underdevelopment of countries like Peru is simply a condition of the development of others.

The General Confederation of Labour (the CGT - Peruvian equivalent of the TUC) has demanded the dismissal of four Ministers (of Defence, the Navy, Home Affairs and Justice), accusing them of choosing to turn the revolution into a civil war. The leadership of the United Left opposition (AL) together with the omnipresent Catholic Church and the unions, has called for a... "protest march". In short they are all trying to lay a graft for their own mills in order to obtain the widest possible support, electoral or otherwise.

In terms of its poverty and backwardness Peru holds one of the leading places in the geography of Latin America. It has a foreign debt of 10 billion dollars and 10 million inhabitants reduced to casual labour in 46% of cases; since 1984 it has suspended all interest payments to American banks, whilst 62% of Peruvians live below the poverty line. About 10% of the population can manage to live without real problems. In Lima - 6 million inhabitants - half the people live by beggars, prostitutes, drifters, Robinson pickets (the so-called "informal" occupations). In the majority of cases we are talking about peasants who have fled from the countryside.

In the Andean south of Ayacucho, controlled by Shining Path, a guerrilla war rages there. The Army has a free hand to carry out a policy reminiscent of the Argentinian methods. Tens of thousands of workers have been butchered here for an ideal of liberty and redemption which Shining Path claims to represent. The reason for them Shining Path is only the armed equivalent of the bourgeois opposition. The "path" which the Peruvian working class have taken will also be "shining" but for the tasks of the communists revolution they will need to build a motorway.

It is exactly fifty years ago since the event which bourgeois historians universally call "the Spanish Civil War" began. The rising of a group of disaffected Army officers on July 18th 1936 soon won it the overwhelming support of the majority sections of the Spanish ruling classes and the instant aid of Fascist dictators like Mussolini and Hitler. The story of how the British and French cliques, in their desire to appease Hitler, cooked up the theory of "non-intervention" to avoid supporting the legally elected popular Front government will now be easily well-known; it is the fact that this played an important part in the victory of the nationalists led by General Franco. Less well-known is the fact that above the real class struggle in Spain which broke out in July 1936 put an end to. Although the rising of the Generals provoked another wave of Spanish revolution by the working class the Spanish Republic sided and abetted by the Anarchists, Socialists and Stalinists was able to survive it. This became the forces which pretended to represent the workers' struggle against the bourgeoisie before that of proletarian revolution. Today's celebrations of the anniversary of the Spanish War are therefore bourgeois celebrations which salute "the anti-fascist struggle" but which pretend that this was all part of the "revolution". My forever, to one of the publications celebrating this, wrote Michael Foot, ex-Labour Leader and himself a trade unionist recalled: better for the future than for everyone else. What he really meant was that the more bourgeois versions of the story are trotted out the safer will the democratic form of capitalist government be. The Marxist reader can only indicate the outline of the real proletarian history of those events by exploding the myth that the fight for the Republic was a working class fight.

## ANTI-FASCISM - THE SLOGAN OF IMPERIALISM

The events in Spain are often treated as if the Iberian Peninsula has no connection with the rest of Europe or that the struggles there were entirely unique. Spain's importance sense this was true since the Spanish ruling class had been so divided in 1914 that it had never entered the First World War. Thus despite the fact that the working class in Spain in the early part of the century there was nothing to compare with the struggles in those countries which had been devastated by the war. The same situation existed between bourgeoisie and proletariat in those countries in the early 1920s (e.g. the defeat of the workers in Italy in 1920 or in Germany in the March Action of 1921) had no sequel in Spain.

The defeat of the revolutionary wave which followed the First World War however, forced its consequences for the Spanish workers in the 1930s since the Spanish workers not only struggled in isolation from most of the rest of the European working class but also faced the full brunt of an imperialist network of diplomacy its final preparations for another generalised war. How did this situation arise?

The First World War, as Bukharin clearly saw, was only the first round in a series of imperialist conflicts which continued to this day. In Eastern Europe, the defeated and discredited bourgeoisie, once they had repelled the revolutionary impulses of the working class and had reassured the most clerical elements of the state, turned to nationalist, authoritarian right wing regimes which aimed at internal order and at imperialist expansion. Fascism became the dominant fascism in the 1920s and 1930s in Europe. With the rise to power of the Nazis in Germany in 1933 came a new round of frenetic diplomatic activities. The effete aristocracy can still Britain, France and Foreign Officers tried to turn "the bestial appetites of Bolchevism" (Churchill). By now however, the USA, about whom much relationship to the revolutionary Bolsheviks of 1917 as a magnet to a corpse. It fed only on its proletarian reputation in order to

# THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR AND THE ANARCHISTS

use it to fool the workers in the rest of Europe into thinking that Russia remained a workers' state. The Comintern, once convinced in Lenin's view that workers international, which would guide the approaching world revolution was by now nothing but a second office of the Foreign Ministry of the Soviet Union, was in the Comintern that Stalin was to launch his major diplomatic offensive to win over the western democracies and anti-Nazi allies. At the time Comintern decided in 1935 the policy of the Popular Front was first announced. Now Communist parties throughout Europe were instructed to make elections their main aim. They were to do only with other so-called workers parties (like the Social Democrats who had saved imperialism both during and after the First World War) but also with the bourgeois conservatives of the old sort who were opposed to the new totalitarian government of fascism. Anti-fascism was thus the slogan which united the workers of Western imperialism. Although it failed initially to achieve Stalin's objective it was the ideological basis of the alliance with the USA and Britain after 1936. In Spain though anti-fascism was to perform a great service for the Spanish bourgeoisie.

## THE SPANISH REPUBLIC AND THE POPULAR FRONT

The Spanish bourgeoisie had been unable to establish a stable form of domination over society even under conditions for the accumulation of capital were good. In the situation after the 1929 Wall St. Crash when the class struggle intensified it found a new ally in the anarchist organisations of the working class. This was the fundamental cause of the bourgeois "Civil War". The tragedy for the Spanish workers was that the first civil war against the Spanish bourgeoisie was abandoned as it became drawn into the struggle on the side of "democracy" against fascism.

The Spanish Republic was set up in 1931 following the collapse of the military dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera who had been the last Spanish monarch to become manifestly insoluble. The Republic was the product of Republican and Socialist intellectuals who represented the industrial bourgeoisie (the large Socialists' party was in fact a millionaire form of industrial holding in the Basque country) and increasingly aroused the anger of the traditional capitalist classes who tried to retain their traditional privileges whilst using the new power of domination that capitalism gave them over the labour force. But the latter organisations themselves effectively though to power from 1931 to 1935 (the so-called "Black Two Years") the Socialists, Communists and tiny Communist Party (PCE) eagerly grasped at the Popular Front as the ticket to power. In order to win the elections of February 1936. The accession to power of the Left wing of the Spanish working class did not lead to a new period of quietness in the class struggle. Rather the opposite happened since the working class intensified its struggle and demanded that the bourgeois capitalists keep some of the gains of the revolution. Liberal with in the election campaign. Strikes, assassinations and lockouts were daily occurrences in the first half of 1936. It was the failure of the Popular Front in the working class that led to the attempted coup by Franco. But Franco's coup unleashed a spontaneous revolt of the workers throughout Spain - all over in Madrid and Barcelona.

## THE WORKERS RISING

When news of Franco's coup reached Madrid the Republican leaders of the Government were paralysed. Although they had arms at their disposal they knew the dangers that Spanish capitalism could run if these were handed over to the one force capable of organising against the Generals. The working class would not only be able to fight the fascists but could be in a position to carry out a socialist revolution. While the Government of Martinez Barrios refused to arm the workers the working class were

already attacking the barracks of Republican Assault Guards and the Civil Guard in Madrid and Barcelona and seized arms for themselves. In this situation the Popular Front Government shuffled the pack once more and replaced Martinez Barrios by the General Goded who could not PSOE leaders. This government now sanctioned what was already going on except that the weapons were released into the hands of the trades unions. The workers were still able to easily find the organisational means to recuperate the spontaneous revolt of two days earlier. It was the beginning of a process which converted the masses of the workers into the mere adjunct of an inter-imperialist war. Instrumental in this process, and indeed central to it was the role of the two supposedly Marxist organisations, the anarchist CNT and the PSOE and its union organisation, the UGT.

## THE DEBACLE OF SPANISH ANARCHISM

Anarchism is currently undergoing something of revival in Western Europe though it seems unlikely that the majority of those who now identify as anarchists know much about either its history or its theory. In Spain the bankruptcy of anarchism theory was to have tragic consequences for the proletariat. In 1934 the anarchist of the CNT-FAI represented the vast majority of the class conscious proletarians of Barcelona and they openly declared the struggle against Franco to be the basis of a social revolution. Unfortunately these fine words were not matched by CNT deeds which revealed the inadequacy of anarchism as a revolutionary theory of the proletariat.

The first "Anarchist capitulation" came in Catalonia where the bourgeois President of the Catalan Government, Largo Caballero, told them that "Today you are the masters of the city", a thought so terrifying for them that they promptly accepted his plea that "you can continue to be our loyal friends and we are convinced that when the rest of Spain is dead and desires passionately that Catalonia should henceforth stand among the most progressive countries in the world." (From the book by the CNT leader Garcia Oliver, DO JULIO A JULIO). So instead of destroying bourgeois power the Anarchists left it intact and soon fell in with the Popular front morality which they obtained from earlier. Instead of procressing the end of the Popular Front and its replacement with proletarian power they actually set up the Anti-Fascist People's Committee which co-ordinated the actions of the Anarchists with those of the Socialists and the Communists and thus consolidated the bourgeois power of the bourgeois front government. In November 1936 they went one better and joined the Madrid Government, now headed by Largo Caballero of the PSOE. When the PCE, FAI and CNT leaders Garcia Oliver joined the Popular Front, the CNT daily, SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA, called it "the most transcendental day in the history of the Spanish Revolution".

"The government in this hour, as a regulating instrument, represents the organism of the State. The lower represents the organism which divides society into classes. And both will tend even less to oppress the people as a result of the intervention of the CNT in the organism." (See LIBRE DOCUMENTO SPANISH REVOLUTION by the anarchist Vernon Richards.) After denying for decades that the Madrid Government was unable to survive the Anarchists now leapt into bed with the bourgeoisie claiming that this prostitution would complete the bourgeois state to the working class. Furthermore CNT used the same slogans as the other Popular Front parties that the war and the revolution were inseparable. This was precisely what the bourgeoisie wanted since for the anti-fascist fight was the best means to undermine the independent struggles of the

## **MYTH OF ANARCHISM**

anarchists would concide to take refuge in the fact that revolution was taking place in Spain. In effect, they did not only reveal the nature of anarchism in that it without control of the economic situation, but also shows that they blind to the facts. Collectives, whatever the name, do not do away with an essentially exploitative class society. Each for itself in competition with each other, had a world which divided the rich and poor, depending on around them. Even though they were forced to live in poverty.

This was particularly true of the first week of the workers' insurrection after the Franco

of the workers' insurrection after the Franco coup. The issue was posed clearly at the time by the International Communist Left in their journal BILAN: "The facts speak clearly in this respect. It was precisely after 19th July that the proletariat, by joining its armed struggle with the general strike succeeded in advancing the furthest on the



: and their enemies outside the Moncada Barracks

ns about a political and  
the Anarchists became  
process of the  
itself and thus paved  
ring the way for the  
of the Stalinist  
the May Days of 1937 in  
revolutionary road, acquiring the highest  
political consciousness compatible with its  
ideological premises, carrying the SOCIAL  
struggle to its highest point. The May Days  
strike immediately took on a political and  
insurrectionary character while the workers  
were putting forward their demands: the 36  
hour week, wage increases, the tentative  
folk

THE STALINISTS factorie

er only the sorcerer's apprentice - grasping the necessity for the destruction of the bourgeois state. But this understanding could have been reached subsequently, in the course of the process of formation of a party, if the workers had kept the struggle on the terrain of their own class.

the national reformist party of its  
time, but unlike its  
where it was at one time  
it was still a workers  
bourgeoisie party.  
war in 1914. This  
was not involved in  
any way in the other  
However, the FSOE  
its collaboration since its  
minister of Labour under  
whether he was  
set up as a alliance  
liberal politicians. What  
as a workers party  
class interests, their material conditions,  
the whole which would allow them  
to oppose the whole of the capitalist system." It was  
socialist UGT and the anarchist CNT both  
brought the general strike to CNT both  
of the war against Franco. They  
returned factories to bourgeois controlled  
the Popular Front. From so  
that only  
Nationalist-owned factories were expropriated  
and transformed into  
spontaneous UGT committees into the  
Anti-Fascist Militia Committee which was a  
were appendages to the Popular Front.

In November 1936 the collaboration of the CNT  
and the FSOE UGT reached its apogee in the  
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was created specifically to increase loyalty of the workers to the Popular Front. In short it permitted the process of the class war into an imperialist war. This was further underlined by the entry of the Stalinists into the Government for the first time. Although there were only three ministers they retained an influence which was far greater than since the USSR was entirely dependent on the USSR for men and other supplies. This influence tended to further the policies of Stalin in an alliance with the Western powers. It meant that the social revolution had to be crushed.

## THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY

siders of the Spanish Communist Party singularly colourless bunch and the had been a plant tool at the beginning of the war. At the beginning of the war they had been minuscule but the need Spanish bourgeoisie soon changed by the war caught Stalin by surprise and it was thus some months before he sent arms to aid the Republicans. The Communists were led by Ruiz and Codovilla. They were soon to be the chief rulers on the Republican side. First orders to the PCE was that it the rights of the people over those in the Republic. The other smaller divided Liberal Republican parties led to do this. Whilst the initial behind the policy was to prove to the British and French that the "new" government did not have the support of the "democracies" it led to a rise in PCE membership.

this policy won over individual Tories like the Duke of Atholl, the French and the Spanish, as well as the German and Russian ones, so that the Comintern failed. However, within Spain there was a dramatic rise in the numbers of the CNT, which became a main party on the basis of its industrial organization. It was the producer of areas like Murcia and Andalucia. And with the PCE in the Government, it had the advantage of the split amongst the leftists. It was able to increase its influence (such as the replacement of the old bourgeois army and the creation of the Spanish guard reserved and destined to suppress the revolution). In May 1937 the PCE was ready to crush the last vestiges of proletarian independence which continued to exist in the industrial centers (mines, factories and factories) in Catalonia. The "May Day" of 1937 began when the PCE attempted to seize the Barcelona headquarters of the CNT and the CGT and to arm the three unions within the city. This was the final action of the CNT before it reality they did not understand what they were doing. They wanted to assassinate the leaders of the PCE, who was to deliver the city into the hands of the Stalinists. Whilst a few militiamen were present, a light skirmish took place between the working class and the CNT leaders for the last time before they were delivered up to the PCE.

sault Guards and the b

The social revolt in the interests of the bourgeoisie—Large Caballero and the like—was not to be expected. In the two years Barcelona and Madrid were subject to two terror, the first that of (Spanish equivalent of the NKVD) and that of Franco.

OP THE SPANISH WAR

We tried to demonstrate here that the workers and the class conscious of the Spanish workers in Spain could not have reached a final conclusion for the working class movement in Spain. The first was that the struggle for the independence of Spain must be based on an International front which as the capacity of imperialism to use all its own advantages. In Spain many events occurred which potential imperialist revisionists from Leninism converted into both a training ground w techniques of warfare (which "Quemica"—so far geographically) can play in the world. The traditional diplomacy leading towards the generalised imperialist war of the

# SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Germany, Russia, Britain and Italy. In the 1920s means were the only possible support the Spanish workers might have counted on would have been from the French working class. Surely it was no accident therefore that the only other working-class which was fully under the influence of the ideology of Popular Frontism was that in France where the workers were not physically defeated but were dominated by the same bourgeois ideology in the guise of socialism as in Spain.

The domination of bourgeois ideology over the proletariat in Spain also accounts for the failure of the Spanish workers to break either from PSOE reformism or the petty bourgeois localism of the CNT to form the class party of the proletariat. Even the elements which attempted to break with the domination of the counter-revolutionary Third International like the POM, the Friends of Durruti and the Trotskyists all ended up some time later in trap of anti-fascism. Instead of supporting the autonomous struggles of the proletariat in July 1936 they tried to limit these struggles within the limits of the bourgeois leadership of the Popular Front. Instead of a war against ALL the bourgeoisie they wanted a war against the Nationalists first and hoped to save the working class for the future when they all supported the Popular Front governments, all wanted to limit the general strike of 1936 to factories which made no revolution. The war effort which they called for "defence of the revolution" rather than make the real revolution against the bourgeoisie state in its democratic form (See the evidence of the ex-Trotskyist participant in the CNT in his article "Salvo de Durruti"). One thing that the Spanish War proves above all others is that the proletariat in this century can no longer follow the policies of the left of the 1917 revolution for the left of the bourgeoisie against the right. The only path to the emancipation of the working class lies in the struggle on its own terrain and for its own interests.

And to fight for its own interests it is essential that the working class creates the basic form of political organisation which leads to the isolated fight against the bourgeoisie ideology and acts as a practical guide in the vital moments when proletarian action on a wide scale is possible. The international experience of the past century in the course of the Spanish war points to the absence of such an organisation - a fact which was indicative of the depth of the counter-revolution after the working class everywhere following the defeat of the post-war revolutionary wave in the 1920s. It also shows that political consciousness of

## REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES

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Theoretical Journal of the Communist Workers Organisation



Plus - Tertiarization : A Contemporary Myth

# IRELAND

*Continued from p5*

the working class cannot be a mere passive product of the economic conditions of the time. In the 1930s the Spanish proletariat faced enormous economic hardships (e.g. unemployment amongst Basque miners) but the working class did not respond with militant and heroic aspects for united action on a class basis but it was not sufficient for the Spanish working class to see through the pretensions of the CIO, the CP and others who they believed to be their real representatives. Proletarian political consciousness therefore has to be fought for, whatever the economic conditions that are facing the working class. This remains the major task of communists today. It is the prime activity of the International Bureau of the Revolutionary Party to which the CIO must submit. The struggle of the proletariat must be international and it must be the expression of the independent struggles of the working class capable of understanding the living conditions and the struggles of the past and applying those lessons to today's working class practice.

## SPAIN FIFTY YEARS AFTER

Today in Spain as in 1936 we find the main tasks of the PSOE in power, with Felipe Gonzales doing precisely the same job (albeit with different rhetoric) for the bourgeoisie as Largo Caballero did fifty years ago. The workers of Spain today are no longer taken in by talk of not striking against a "socialist" government. In the car factories of Valencia and especially in the suburbs of Girona the Spanish working class have spearheaded the resistance to the austerity measures which the crisis of profitability of Spanish capital has forced the bourgeoisie into in order to profit. The only force capable of carrying this out (precisely because of its supposed record in the election) is the PSOE. The workers left in power (as in the recent elections) the Spanish bourgeoisie hopes to carry its austerity plans still further and has remained in power having had initially success. For their part the workers of Girona have shown that they are capable as laying down their lives to defend their conditions of work as their working-class ancestors. Already they have responded to police tear gas by arming themselves. However, the chief weapon of the working class is its capacity for self-organisation. Once the workers everywhere are struggling simultaneously and in solidarity with each other organised under the leadership of their own party they will be irresistible.

Then the nostalgia of the Spanish War will be recognised for the nightmare it was and its legacy can be repudiated altogether by the deeds of the proletariat of the present:



- o শুভ পঞ্জাৰ কলকাতা বাবু মোহন, মুমুক্ষু
- o পৰিবেশী-বেস্ট সেকুণ্ডাৰিয়া কুমুড়ো প্রক্ষেপণ
- o বিনোদ পাতকা পুস্তকালয় কুমুড়ো মুমুক্ষু
- o বিনোদ পাতকা পুস্তকালয় কুমুড়ো মুমুক্ষু
- o বিনোদ পাতকা পুস্তকালয় কুমুড়ো মুমুক্ষু

সুবিধা পুস্তকালয় কুমুড়ো মুমুক্ষু

৩০০০ পৃষ্ঠা

৫০০ পৃষ্ঠা

FOR BENGALI READERS LAL PATAKA, THE Bengali language publication of the supporters of the International Bureau in India is now available. Write to: Lal Pataka, 81 Jamia Road, Bijnorpur 722122, Bankura, West Bengal, INDIA for rates.

"Contract" in Britain, and the Irish equivalent, the "Codes of Practice" in Ireland both prove that the unions are prepared to sell down the decaying system of which they are an integral part.

Essentially, it is this negotiating role which dictates the anti-working class nature of the union today. Whether their leaders are 'left' or right, 'militant' or 'moderate'. Such subjective factors can only influence whether or not a particular union is explicit in its co-operation with the state, i.e. whether it is really 'bureaucratic' or 'democratic'. The politics of the leadership cannot make any union a working class organisation when the only lasting gain left to be made is in the socialist revolution.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY ALTERNATIVE

The problems of union sabotage faced recently by Irish workers are the problems of the class internationally, as capitalism relentlessly steps up its attacks. The CWO's only special call on the workers of Ireland is to utterly expose the capitalist nature of the CIO and of nationalism, which attempts to persuade us that gains are to be had by affiliating to one or other capitalist nation-state. Otherwise, we remain neutral to the bosses everywhere.

Agitate for all struggles to be under the control of an elected strike committee responsible to and recallable by a mass assembly of all workers involved.

\* Do not be content with union style token picketing. Extend solidarity actions beyond factory boundaries and include the unemployed (including the unemployed).

\* Fight against the unions for an effective struggle against the bosses. Ignore union ballots and delaying tactics.

\* Expose the union manoeuvres to sabotage the struggle. The whole of the CIO helps the bosses in its network of pro-capitalist factions fighting for a communist perspective within the workplaces. 2

From being 'unrealistic' or 'utopian' acts, these are the first steps in a real workers fightback against capitalism's attacks.

**NOTES:**

1. For a more detailed explanation of the CIO position on trade unions see the text "Marxism and the Trade Union Question" in Revolutionary Perspectives #20.

2. For more information on Factory Groups and Unemployed Workers Groups see our Platforms available from the CWO's addresses.

## CWO PUBLIC MEETING

"The Communist Position on the Nature of the Soviet Union."

Saturday 6th September at 7.30 p.m.  
The Crown, The Old Market, BRISTOL.

## REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES

19



60p  
Journal of the Communist Workers Organisation

# RUSSIA RE-MYSTIFIED

## THE RCP'S NEW APOLOGY FOR STATE CAPITALISM

THE SOVIET UNION DEMYSTIFIED by Frank Furedi  
a Junius Publication.

This book is the latest offering from the so-called "Revolutionary Communist Party", a Trottskyist organisation that till now has concentrated on certain international issues, such as the nature of the Soviet social system. In this work, their weightiest attempt yet to establish their theory, they have tried to bridge the gap. However, this publication situates the RCP more firmly than ever in the Trottskyist tradition of vulgarisers of Marxism, who see capitalist society as a transitional mode of production, a new social form which is neither a workers' democracy nor capitalism. Such a political halfway house is incompatible with Marxism and provides a rationale for opportunism and political duplicity.

There are essentially three main planks to the RCP's arguments. The first is that the law of value no longer operates in the USSR; the second is that the bureaucracy does not represent the working class; and the third is that the Soviet Union is not an imperialist power. In effect these positions contribute to the most effective critique of Stalinism that has been put forward since the apology for, and political accommodation with it.

### THE LAW OF VALUE.

Discussing the industrialisation of the 1930's Furedi says,

"...the death of the capitalist market also meant the passing of the law of value as the regulator of society's labour power. Instead of the market, a chain of commodity relations, the allocation of resources" (p.98).

To pursue this logic implies that communist relations of production could be implemented in the Soviet Union, that the bureaucracy wished, but the capitalist market disappeared without a struggle during world war.

"The rule of the market relationship, except the relations between capital and labour—may disappear without a struggle. The capitalist form of production at the same time the relation between capital and labour is the only developed capitalist relation per se. Short of this, about all the historically favourable forms of production called capitalism cannot disappear." (P. Mattick *Partisan Review* 1941).

The failure of the revolution in Russia to extend itself internationally, meant that communist relations of production could not be built, and that the forces of production could only be developed on a capitalist basis, albeit in the form of state capitalism. State directed accumulation, which made rapid industrialisation, was possible in Russia for two reasons. Firstly because of the organic composition of the national capital which because of its peculiarity could be forced to bear the brunt of the costs of accumulation, by being transformed into agricultural and industrial proletarian. This development of the productive forces made Russia the world's second industrial power, and at the same time begat it's very high organic composition of capital. For Marxists this means that the Russian economy will experience the same tendency for the rate of profit to fall, as in the western economies. Such a conclusion can only be demonstrated logically, to the disguised nature of commodity production, and the absence of accounting in strict profit terms, but nothing else can explain declining Soviet growth, except falling profit rates, and these stem from the operation of the law of value in the Russian economy. The effects of this law may have appeared to all but the most autarchic of the 1930's, but the need to replace obsolete constant capital, by importing western technology, has meant the competitive drive of the Soviet Union onto the world market. In other words, Russian economic growth is not planned by the

resources in the Kremlin, but by world capitalism.

According to Furedi, "Soviet workers do not sell their labour-power, labour power is not a commodity, there is no market in labour. Nor do Soviet workers earn wages in the same way as workers in the west, the relationship between wage and price [wage] standards that prevails under capitalism has been substantially modified in the Soviet Union."

The analysis of the nature of Russia however, cannot begin from the sphere of circulation, but must be sought in the process of production and accumulation. For us the capitalist nature of the Soviet Union is in the very character of labour power, by the separation of the producers from the means of production and the accumulation of capital based on the extraction of surplus value from labour power. In Russia the producers are wage-labourers, exchanging their only commodity against a wage, which they in turn exchange for other commodities which ensure their existence. This relationship is the backbone of the capitalist nature of the whole economy.

"Thus capital pre-supposes wage-labour, wage-labour pre-supposes capital. They reciprocally condition each other, they reciprocally bring each other forth." Marx, in *Wage Labour and Capital*.

Despite wage fixing, and attempts to prevent or enhance the movement of labour of which existed in Germany before making it non-capitalist, wage labour has never been other than a commodity in Russia, hence the surplus for accumulation has taken the form of surplus value, and this expansion of the form of capitalist accumulation.

### THE QUESTION OF CLASS.

Having added nothing to the worn eaten corpus of Trottskyism on the law of value, the RCP try to add a new twist to the question of the law of value by defining bureaucracy as a class. They argue that the bureaucracy, which reject the view that the bureaucracy is, or can be a class, because of its "inex-cep-tion of domination", is a class of overt ownership. They also reject the view that the bureaucracy is a caste, and claim that it is best described as a "political order". This is a typical Trottskyist evasion of analysis. The formalistic separation of politics from economic processes which this implies, ignores the fact that bureaucratise is a class in capitalist society where the exploitation of the working class has not been ensured by its political subordination. Weak national capitals, like Russia, need to impose political control over their value producers in order to survive in the world market.

The RCP follow Trotsky in arguing that the bureaucracy is not a class since it is not hereditary, and since it does not legally own the means of production. But this is beside the point. A class is defined by its function as the collective owner of the surplus created by the labour of the exploited class. Thus bishops, abbots etc. in the Middle Ages were owners of feudal property by function of their office, not the officials in Oriental Despotism. A class is only defined in terms of its recruitment or membership of bourgeois sociology. For Marxists, what constitutes a class is its position in the process of production and re-production. In this sense the state and bureaucracy in Russia constitutes a ruling class.

IS THE SOVIET UNION IMPERIALIST?

The RCP feel that the relations between Russia and the west are of a different kind from those traditional between imperialist powers. Let us allow them to speak for themselves,

"It is clear that the conflict in

East-West relations is of a different order from the rivalries that wax and wane in relations among imperialist powers...Despite the many divisions of the West, in general, the Soviet Union is committed to preserving the existing divisions of the world."

Again this is a fallacy, that ignores the imperialist imperative for Russia, because it ignores the accumulation problems of state socialism. Russia emerged at the end of WWI as the last bastion of the first order, extending its control over E. Europe and temporarily over Manchuria. These areas are partly loosely located, and partly too populous for today. Russian imperialism's private fiefdom is the Comcon bloc, which functions as a huge capstone for the Soviet Union. It is due to its vast trade deficits with the Comcon states, that Russia is able to run an equally large deficit with the west. Many European states would prefer to trade freely with the Soviet Union, but the use of the non-convertible ruble as a means of Comcon trade (not to mention Russian tanks) prevents this.

The basic pattern of Russian aid is imperialist. In return for military and economic aid Russia's clients are compelled to hold over its clients' economies. Thus the Cuban sugar crop has been mortgaged to Russia for decades, and in Angola 90% of the fishing rights are held by Soviet companies. The basic pattern of Russian trade is also imperialist, of unequal exchange. Russia imports raw materials from the peripheral regions at low prices, manufactures them, and exports machinery in return at above the Asiatic value, thus increasing the profitability of the home economy.

For the RCP, the contradictions between East and West are "epidemic and conjunctural", the real contradictions being those between the 1st and 2nd world powers, i.e. US and USSR. A statement such as this can only be based on a profound misreading of the whole history of the post war era, which has seen the development of a constellation of states around two antagonists, the USA and USSR. One is dominated economically and militarily by the USA, the other by Russia, and it is the conflicts within these blocs that are episodic.

### CONCLUSION.

The political stand-point of the RCP is not clearly delineated in this work, but between the lines we can see that, as are all Trottskyists, as critical defenders of the Soviet Union, touring themselves as advisers to the "people's government" of which they can be seen in statements like the following:

"The Soviet bureaucracy's main hope for the future lies in rising international imperialism. Imperialism will weaken the external threat to the Soviet Union, and allow the bureaucracy to play opponents off against one another. In this way they can easily embark on such a course though so far with limited results." (p.266).

This attempt to re-mystify the Soviet Union, certainly has produced limited results, in that it has succeeded in adding to the tortured apologetics of Trottskyism. The Soviet social system. Lurking below the surface are all the classic assumptions of that conception that Russia is a transitional society, that it is not yet fully socialism, and that in its conflicts with the west it deserves the support of revolutionaries. The effects of this revisionist Marxists, the capitalist nature of Russia, that a social revolution is necessary to destroy it, and that in its conflicts with western imperialism, revolutionary defeatism is the correct line. The revisionist book nails the RCP's colours to the mast, as opponents of such a reactionary position.

# WORKERS VOICE

## IRELAND NORTH AND SOUTH

### UNIONS ORGANISE DEFEAT

In the first week of July the all-Ireland Irish Congress of Trade Unions, its anarchist section included, as well as including all the leftist phrasemongering body of its British counterpart, the governing body also reviewed its record in the handling of recent strike activity. In the Conference's resolution on "Comintern" was in the dis-organisation of the class struggle than the TUC.

The hearty condemnation of "discredited sonetarism" accompanied by calls for a return to the glories of failed pre-war revolution in favour of...? Similarly, an explicit desire to avoid the "constitutional question" of the status of Northern Ireland contrasted with Comintern's leading leap into the equally revolutionary nationalities of "national interests" politics. McCusker, president of the ICTU, displayed his credentials in the course of the meeting when he called on both British and Irish governments to step up exploitation of his members: "As we have to compete in today's highly competitive world economy, we cannot afford not to make the best possible use of our most precious resource, namely our workforce."

The desire of the unions to aid "national recovery", with the working class picking up the bill, is typical of the Comintern, will come as no surprise to the latest victims of union tactics. Recent struggles North and South have demonstrated that these tactics can be used by workers within the bounds of ruling class legality, while at the same time derailing any chance of an effective fightback against the bosses by isolating strikers both geographically and by industry.

#### UNION COMPROMISE EQUALS UNION SABOTAGE

The eve of the ICTU conference witnessed the end of two significant strike movements in Belfast itself. After two months on strike which had seen drivers at the Royal Victoria Hospital confront the armed RUC on the picket lines, the Congress successfully negotiated a return to work just when solidarity from other

ancillary staff was beginning to become more tangible and effective. The strike began in response to pay conditions proposed by the management and represented a pre-emptive action by the workers to fight the probable redundancies resulting from the package with regard to which the TUC had believed precisely nothing but claimed a victory in the winning of an "independent" inquiry into the dispute.

A similar "compromise" took place in a seven week province wide strike by 1,500 bus drivers, who's most militant support in Belfast's Citybus depots. In a tactic reminiscent



Workers must struggle against the unions too!

of the miners' strike, the energies of the workers were first sapped by an overtime ban before the strike "proper" was conducted in a series of token one day Friday stoppages which were announced to the management well in advance. The one "accord" of the union settlement was a marginally increased pay offer of 5.4%, while the strings attached included acceptance of flexible rostering and compulsory overtime for very low paid workers over the strike at the first level.

If the workers in the North faced demoralisation and division at the hands of the capitalistic left, Dublin Corporation manual workers also faced the direct power of the Irish state in the form of the army and the RUC. The use of troops to smash strikes has been a regular option for bosses in Ireland over the last decade, but bussen, firemen, sewage workers and others have been spared much centrally organised scabbing on more than one occasion. This time they had been brought in to clear rubbish in Dublin, a task which they had previously done under previous regimes in 1979 and 1982.

In this struggle however a section of the 4,200 workers on strike demonstrated that they were prepared to put up more than token resistance. The cost of living and wage increase cuts in their standard of living is the clearing operation began on the night of June 5th, strikers clashed with police, some in riot gear, who were escorting some of the army who set fire to huge amounts of rubbish, damaging a local shopping centre.

However, it was then that the unions displayed their policing role for capitalism when officials intervened in the face of calm the picket. Later, the union "condemned" the actions of the army while showing their contempt for any worker who attempted to put up effective resistance: "We do not want anyone saying Dublin

Corporation workers cannot conduct themselves with dignity!"

With the union at the helm, the strike could only ever be led to negotiations and eventual defeat. The other option for the strikers was to organise outside of the union structure altogether, and appeal directly to the workers struggle to raise their own demands. At the same time, a similar group of low paid state employees, 14,000 Telecom Eireann workers, has been involved in this article. It is to assess the TE workers are on the verge of strike action, but face the same fate of isolation as the Dublin Corporation workers unless the lessons of that struggle can be grasped.

The details of the Dublin Corporation "compromise", which came on June 16th, were again typically surrounded with union jargon of management concessions on "principles" according to which the above had any real substance to the agreement. A below the rate of inflation management offer of a 7% pay increase over eighteen months was replaced by minimum payments of £5 and £8 over the same period, representing a percentage increase of 8.2%.

The only response from the ICTU conference on this subject of major gains (or defeats in this terms) was an attempt to give the workers struggles in an even tighter vice. Congress endorsed a call for a reappraisal and strengthening of the system of ICTU "all-out" picketing, which was to be abolished in recent disputes. Is the unions' self-imposed two-tier picketing system the "all-out"? Is the mechanism through which solidarity action is to be carried out the strike committee the only body which can grant it. The decision at this year's conference effectively means that strike movements will be deliberately isolated and emasculated to an even greater extent than previously, as the ICTU increases its control.

#### THE ROLE OF THE UNIONS

For communists, the whole spectrum of counter-revolutionary activities which the unions participate in, from the most passive passivity to the involvement in semi-state bodies and even governments, are not the result of malicious leadership (as the Trotskyists claim), but rather a derivative function in the era of capitalist decadence.

By definition the aim of trade unionism is to negotiate for better terms for the sale of workers labour power. But crisis-ridden capitalism is now unable even to maintain living standards over long periods of time. The unions left with the problem of how to get workers to accept the bosses attacks via real wage cuts, redundancies and so on. The explicit period of wage restraint initiated by the "Social

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